

10-Story Book



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Thirty-third Year

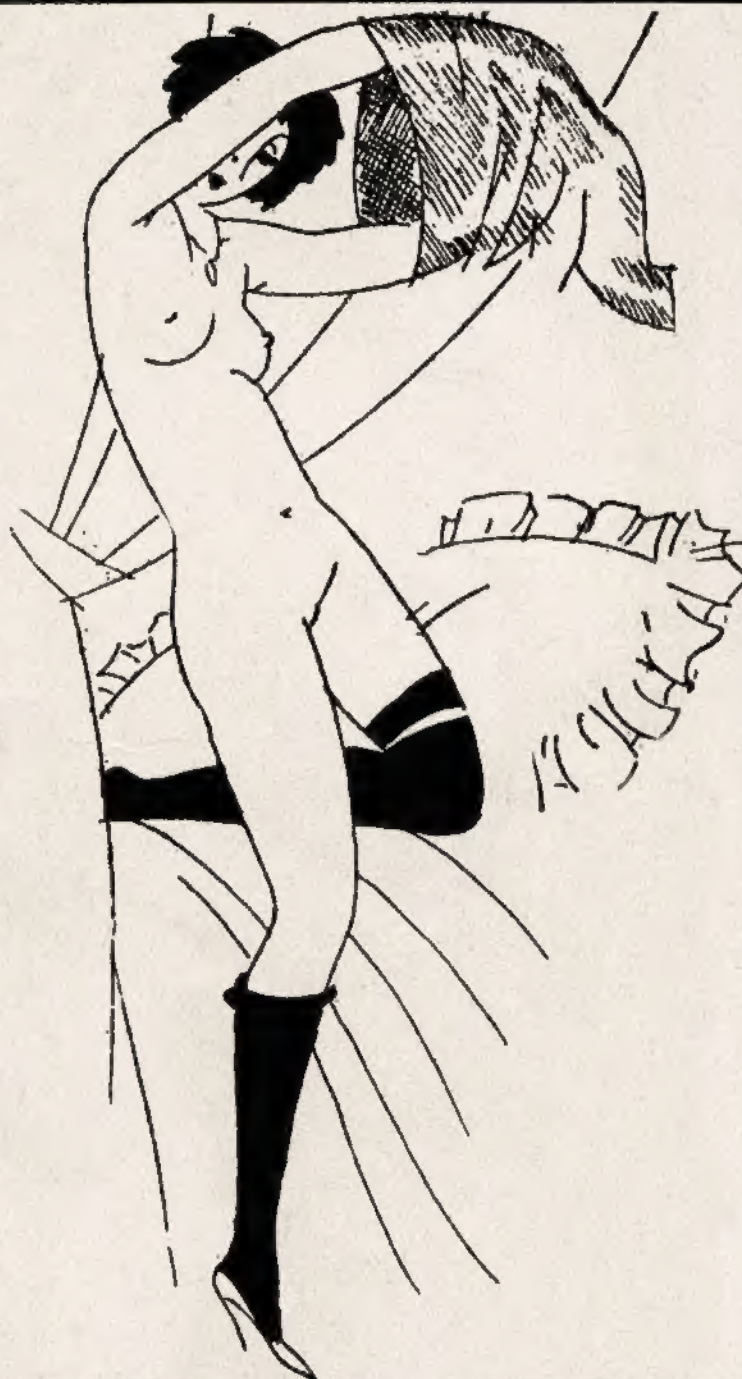
Contents

12 Stories . . . Girl Pictures Also

Illustrations by Carl Link, Hazel G. Keeler, C. O. Longabaugh, Bruce Patterson, Henri of Paris, L. Arnold Grigg of London, Harry Sauvalle, Bob Gon, Jr., Vernon Tobias, Fred Ruemyer, W. A. Leslie, Peony Patsy-gill, Harold DeLay, Jimmy Caborn, and L. Thompson.

SWEET SUE	3
POLLY AND HER POODLE	7
SLANGHOUSE CINDY	9
WILLIE AND THE SWAMI	13
THE SPORTING CHANCE	15
WHITE LIE	19
WHAT THE WOMAN DID	28
ONE MORE THRILL	32
GRAVEYARD SHIFT	37
J. GREEN MURDER MYSTERY	41
THINK OF ME	47
DON J OF TOMBIGBEE	51

Front cover shows Ida Lupino. Inside front cover shows Pat Farr, arrangement Warner Brothers. Inside back cover is an art study from Vienna, arrangement Century Photos. Back cover is Dorothy Lee, arrangement Soibleman Photos.



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Authors and Literary Agents: Yes, we buy stories. But read our magazine first, please! The stories we buy can be any length — sure — 500 words to 5,000. But must contain realism or satire or humor — or SEX INTEREST. We use 1-act plays too — providing they're "reading plays" and not "acting plays." Jokes. Yes. Epigrams. Yes. Naughty newspaper errors. Yes. And don't forget the stamped addressed envelope when sending in contributions.

25c

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**Per
Copy**



She Can Take It!

Meaning Old Sol, in this sun bath she's wallowing in. And she is a blonde, too! Eleanor Bailey is the name of the very parboiled (at time of our going to press) young lady.

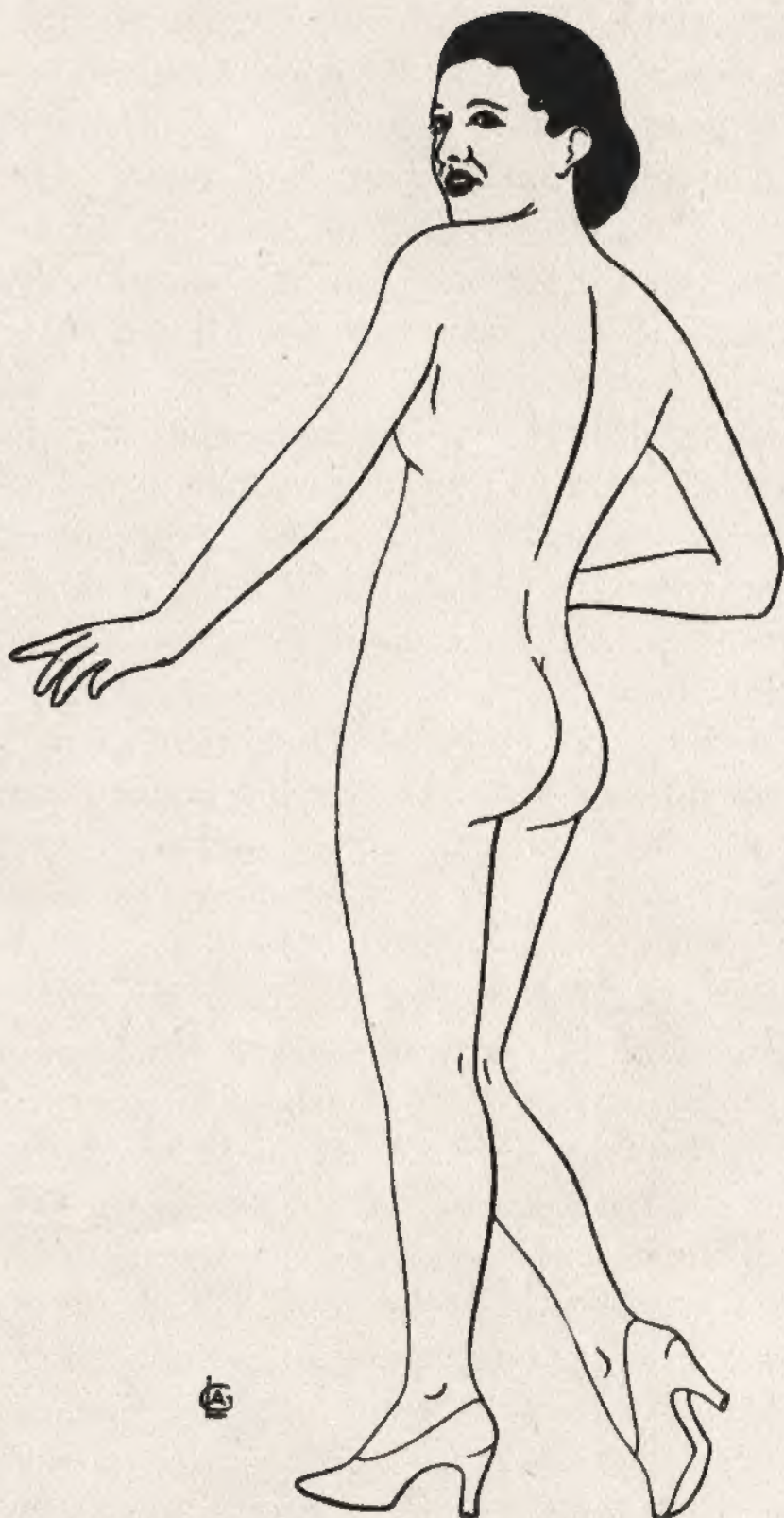
Warner Brothers Photo.

“Sweet Sue”

by

Bill Williams

Picture
by
L. Arnold Grigg



Her name was Sue, and she was an 18-year-old cornfed honey, with plenty of tricks up her kimona sleeve—when she had a kimona on!

SHE was built like the hind quarters of an elephant this gal, Sal Tinker, and probably she was just as tough. But when I ran cross her one day in a clip joint down on Main Street, she was whining like a calf that had been forced on to a skim milk diet before it's time.

Sal laid claim to being responsible for the word “prostitute” being part of the dictionary and I don't doubt but what she was right. She looked old enough to have been one of Cleopatra's chamber maids.

But she couldn't raise a nickel on her own rusty charms.

Even if Sal was more or less out of date and wind broken she was still a winning horse for she had under her control four or five young hens that were still in the peeping stage and quite eligible enough for any monkey shine from turning a hand spring to turning a sucker inside out and wringing him dry.

One of these blandishing females was the cause of my extemporaneous visit to

Sal's place of business that eventful day on orders from the District Attorney.

It seems old J. P. Something or other had stepped out of bounds a trifle. He was lean, lank and handsome as Sal's girls would have said but he was unlucky enough to have been burdened down with a wife.

But old J. P. was in his second childhood or close to that stage for he was beginning to feel his oats once more at a time when he should have been making sure his insurance policies were all in good shape.

A few shots of Sal's furniture polish started those oats to sprouting faster than bees from a punctured nest and that was Sal's cue to sic one of her trained pussies on to the dizzy gent.

She played her shots well for she picked an eighteen year old, corn fed honey to carry on the good work with instructions to trim this Christmas tree right. But the corn fed had a few tricks up her own kimona that hadn't been born yet in Sal's hey-day and she picked J. P. as a likely looking customer to try them on.

Her name was Sue and she earned every letter in it for she began by leading the docile J. P. upstairs over the drinking room to a two by four bedroom she called her own.

But J. P. was groggy. Sue let her kimona flap open enticingly. Her voluptuous breasts bobbed around in front of his nose, and a trifle farther down her shining body there was a navel display that only his vest buttons were reviewing. Beyond that a pair of dainty silk panties half covered the remainder of the charms that were now working the old bozo into a fever sweat.

J. P. had never seen anything so beautiful. At least he admitted as much to the crafty Susan. But the little corn fed must have soaked her tongue in laudanum before she went to work on the

old bird for he passed into the arms of Morpheous before his excess boiler pressure had a chance to blow off.

At least that was what he told the D. A. sort of confidentially the next day when he came to his senses and went down to headquarters. He thrashed things out with the D. A. behind closed doors and when he left an hour later he was a wiser man both financially and morally.

A short time later I got the dope also behind closed doors. It was in the shape of leather wallet crammed full of money but it wasn't worth the paper it was printed on. Yes, it was queer money, several thousand dollars of it.

Sal was slated for a housecleaning at that minute. The D. A. was plenty sore because J. P. was the corner stone of his office. Something had to be done and damn quick. So armed with the wallet and instructions to make Sal replace every dollar of that dough with honest to God currency of the Realm I sauntered down Main Street keyed to the point where I was ready to run the old war horse and her three ringed circus out into the sticks if necessary.

But Sal's joy parlor looked more like a corner in the Public Library when I arrived. Business was at a standstill and the numerous tables scattered round the room were *sans* any customers except the chesty Sal herself. She was reading a copy of a book that I hadn't thought, up 'til now, she had ever even heard of. Yep, it was a Bible and huge blops of water were balancing themselves precariously on her flabby cheeks perhaps hesitating to inspect the abyss below that lay between her breasts now resting on the table.

Dumfounded I stood there scratching my head while I wondered if the old gal was really reforming or had picked up

(Continued to page 6)

"Miss 2636."



Her photo came from Vienna, and the stamping of the cattle on the big boat it came over upon shook off the caption telling who she is. No doubt a movie actress, or dancer, model, or what haven't we!

Copyright D'Ora, Vienna,
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(Continued from page 4)

the book by mistake. Then remembering that I was on business I tossed the wallet on the table in front of her and said,

"You sucked the wrong lemon last night, Sal. There's five thousand dollars of fancy engraved paper in that wallet and the D. A. wants you to redeem it pronto or else you're quits here. Understand?"

But good old Sal never even sighed. She turned over another page in the Bible and fished out a lace bordered handkerchief from some where down around forbidden territory and dabbed it gently to her eyes.

"What is this any how? Are you trying to make a monkey out of me?" I shot at her as I began to get riled up. "I said I want you to redeem this money."

"I heard you the first time," she drawled out unconcernedly and she dropped the book on the table. "I'd like to have some one redeem a nice new one grand bill myself, sweetheart," she smiled.

"Tell it to the Marines, Sal," I said. "They're interested in foreign tales. Where's all your female performers? Are you giving them a vacation on last night's proceeds?"

"Yes," she sneered. "They earned it. When an eighteen year old hick can come in here an' take Sal Tinker over the hurdles like this dame, Sue, did well, it's time for me to retire or something."

"What d'you mean?" I inquired still unable to penetrate her wandering remarks.

"Why she's the one that's passing this queer money. That's what I mean. Last night she swapped bank rolls with old J. P. just so he wouldn't notice it if he did regain his senses before she had a chance to get away. Then the little sorceress had the crust to tell me that he slipped her a grand note for her entertainment abilities."

"Well, maybe he did, Sal," I said. Knowing that when a man's charged alcoholically he is liable to do funny things.

"Not on your tin-type," she snarled back at me. "She had a grand note all right but she didn't get it from him. There it is," and she tossed it on to the table in front of me. "I was fool enough to change it into small bills for her. Damn near cleaned me out of ready cash too at that."

"So the up and coming generation is getting too smart for you, eh, Sal?" I said. "But what's a little cash to you? You'll make that up in no time. How about this bunch of paper I have here? What do you intend to do about it?"

"Not a damn thing," she said and she picked up the Book again. "You can tell J. P. for me that he'd better keep a tight hold on to his shirt or that little sorceress will make it run up and down his back like a window shade."

"Say, what is this sorceress business, anyhow?" I asked. "When did you get so damned educated?"

"Last night, sweetheart. So did J. P. for sweet little Sue showed me a nice pair of silk panties that have the swellest set of finger prints on them you ever saw. Nice heavy black ink ones too. Did he mention anything about his soiled fingers this morning? Sue said she was keeping the panties for a souvenir, you know, Just in case J. P. should get up on his high horse occasionally. Now isn't that sorcery for you?"

"Well, I'll be damned," I emitted surprised. "But you didn't find that word in the Bible, I hope?"

"Yes, it's in here, old dear, but I just found it out. I guess I'm getting too old to buck this game any more. So I'm thinking of becoming an Evangelist or something. Don't slam the door when you go out."

(Continued to page 8)



Polly's poodle, sez, "Y' just can't trust these darn women!"

Drawn for 10-Story Book by Jimmie Caborn.

(Continued from page 6)

Well, I took the wallet back to the D. A.'s office and Sal's thousand buck note also. J. P.'s mouth shut up like a clam when he heard the news. Yes, the little corn fed morsel came back to town but she received as much protection as the crown jewels would have got at a Four Hundred Ball.

Sue is still her name even though she has a swell three room apartment and sports sables. Sue is her occupation also

which old J. P. could testify to if he had a mind to talk. The pink panties have well earned their keep and Sue has had them photographed just to remind J. P. occasionally that they're still useful even if they are out of date.

Sal? Oh, yes, I saw her the other day punching a tambourine down on Main Street while she warbled some song that had to do with saving sinners. Cock eyed world all right, damned if it ain't.



"What I like about our little colony is the personal contacts."

Drawn for 10-Story Book by Bruce Patterson.

Moch piffawmers was there, by palace: moosicers, who blew chunes on dried noodles; jigglers who jiggled injun clubs; artists as drew green elemp Hunts out from red paint.

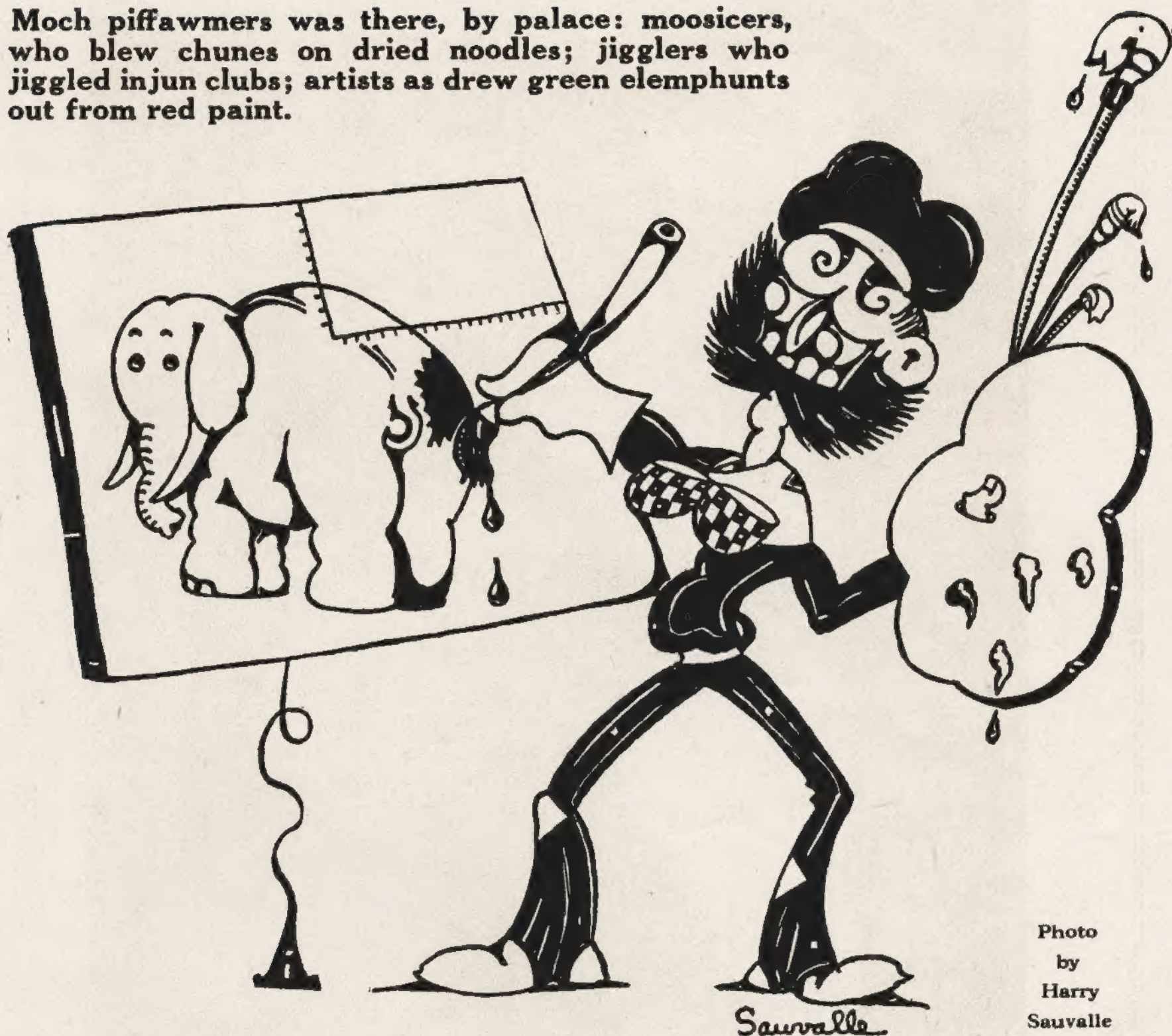


Photo
by
Harry
Sauvalle

Slanghouse Cindy by Duke Rorey

(A famous fairy tale written down for college students and politicians)

DE POISONS OF THE PLAY:

Cinderella—a cha'min' wench in rags, better known in her dot of sluts as Cindy.

First Stepsist—un lass wit danglin' morals

Second Stepsist—un tart wit a squeaky spiel

Fairy Godma—a doubtful dame with a rubbery neck

Princey—a dupe and a mooch over the babes

SCENE VON:—(A bedroom—none the least—in a litt'l ole shack in Injun Apples, Old Joisey. Tis about eight clanks of the clock, p. m. And Cindy, at curtain yank, is curled up on the double snoozer, sandpapering her false teeth

(Continued to page 11)



**A
Busy
Day
Tomorrow!**

When a lady lies on her tummy, thusly, figuring out things so deeply, it means many "aperntments" for next day. Hairdressers, manicurists, and modistes—to clothe the shapely form thus pondering!

(Continued from page 9)

which she later dips into the family bucket of whitewash — an old Joisey custom (quaint and queerish).

(The two stepin sisters are steppin' into their stepins, whistlin' gayly that grand ole ballad, "The Dark Town Jitters Ball." You see, they're gettin' ready fer the annual brawl at the Palace tonight; so on mit the show!)

1ST STEPIN: Hot cha! Betcha it'll be some swell party tonight, eh, sister?

2ND STEPIN: Yeah man! An' I sure hope the princey goes ga-ga over me, after all the pains I've took in gettin' to smell nice.

1ST STEPIN: Listen, dearie. I sure hate ta put the skids ontayer dreams like this, but the princy tolt me—poisonally—that him and me was gonna have one sweel time together—alone.

2ND STEPIN: Did the chump say that?

1ST STEPIN: Yees! So you'd better tie your panties on tight, dearie, cause I'm the litt'l gal what's gonna be the big stuff at this throw, not you. See dearie?

2ND STEPIN: Why that louzy, lounge lizard! He slung me the same rope.

1ST STEPIN: He what? Why the——!

CINDY: (interrupting) Hey, you two pineapples. Quit the squawkin' fer a minnit, can't ya? How about one of yez lendin' me a dress tagota the ball in? Huh?

1ST STEPIN: Nix on that stuff, half-sister. Everytime you gota parties, you hook our sugar dadies. Nix!

CINDY: So what?

1ST STEPIN: So if you wanna go, you'd better borry someother damE's frock. An since ya don't know no other damE, guess we won't be aseein' ya. (to the 2nd Stepin) What'd you say, dearie?

2ND STEPIN: Yowsi! Yowsi!

CINDY: (enraged) Oak! So the next time

either of you two dizzy molls ask me to lendja a brassy er' somethin', I'll just say "nertz to you keed!"

(All three fly off the knob at this)

UNISON: Oh yeah?—Nertz yerself, half-sister——imagine sich crust——bla bla, bla, (ect.)

(Black out and curtain)

SCENE TU:—(The same jernt only two bells later. Alone is Cindy, squatting on the edge of the brass snoozer, bawling like a fresh offspring, her nose running to the floor in torrents. She sniffles.)

CINDY: (In Soto Voca) Oh me! Oh my! Omorum! Omis! Omos! Omis! Woe is me! (sniff) Sich a cruel cruel world! (sniffle) There ain't no justice, there ain't (sniff) (etc. etc. etc., in fact, etc.)

FAIRY: (comes down the chimney and looks around, sees Cindy). What simms to be the trouble Cindy, ole gal?

CINDY: (heartbroken and bewildered) Who are you, ya ole witch? How'd you know my label was Cindy anyway?

FAIRY: (in a deep, dark, and mysterious voice) Ah! I knows all, sees all, hears all, smells all, and by Gad, I've done all.

CINDY: (back to the bawling) Aw scram outa here, wontcha? You're screwy, you ole witch! Can't cha see, I've been squelched, and wanna be alone? (sniff, sniffle, sniff).

FAIRY: Ah, my dear lil wench. Tis why I am here.

CINDY: For why? (sniff)

FAIRY: (impatient) To git ya to the brawl tonight, ya dumb cluck!

CINDY: (excited) Ya ain't foolin'?

FAIRY: Noy.

CINDY: Are you a real fairy, honest?

FAIRY: No, nothin' so common as that. Why chile, I's yer godma, what knows how to do everything.

CINDY: Ya sure ya ain't screwy?

FAIRY: Listen Cindy. One more crack like that, and I'll clamp the gutters onya.

CINDY: (*sweetly*) Tis sorry I am, fairy godma.

FAIRY: S'oak! All right then, the first think ya gotta do is go out into the garden and pluck me a pumpkin with a handle on it.

(*Cindy goes. The witch prances up and down the floor muttering in mysterious tones*)

Alla — mogoo cabache! Alla — mogoo cabache!

(*Cindy returns*)

CINDY: There ain't no pumpkins this time of the year, so I hooked this from under the neighbors bed. Is it O. K.?

FAIRY: Quite! Quite! Indeed! And all that sort of rot. Now, Cindy, close your lamps up tight. (*Cindy obeys by holding her hands over her eyes. Fairy rubs the pumpkin (?) vigorously*)

Alla — mogoo cabache! Alla — mogoo Cabache!

(*Cindy's rags fall to the floor and a swanky black satin frock takes its place. The roar of a motor is heard, and suddenly a brand new car rolls out of the chimney. The fairy has traded the pumpkin (?) in for a Chevy. Consult Ergene O'Zeal for full particulars on stage direction*)

Now, open your lamps Cindy, and look.

CINDY: (*stricken dumb*) Oh! Oh! Tain't true! Tis true! Tain't true! Tis true! Tain't!

FAIRY: Tis!

CINDY: (*still doubtful, goes over and honks horn in Chevy*) Tis! Oh, fairy godma, I'm tickled to a rail. Everything's so ducky; and you've made me feel soooo happy.

FAIRY: Now, you can go to the ball—but you've got to remember this—

CINDY: I knew there was gona be some

pink tape mixed up in this somewhere. Go ahead, dish the dirt. What's the rub?

FAIRY: Ya gotta leave the ball at twelve bells on the tick or yer Chevy 'n all yer clothes will fade out into the night.

CINDY: Leavin' me without—

FAIRY: Yees. Leavin' jist you. Will ya do it?

CINDY: Course, I'll do it. You dear sweet ole dear fairy you. (*she falls to the floor and kisses her godma's big toe*)

FAIRY: Ouch! You silly wench. My corns! (*Black-out and curtain*)

SCENE TWA:—(*At the palace ball room, with oodles of orchestras, flowers and balloons strewn all over the place, everybody knee high in gin, under the tables, on top of tables, everywhere, anywhere, laughs, grunts, groans, etc. (Cindy and the princey have been dancing together all evening.)*)

PRINCEY: Wanta know somethin', Cindy?

CINDY: What?

PRINCEY: I'm just nuts about you.

CINDY: Ya wouldn't josh a litt'l gal, would ja?

PRINCEY: Ya mean that 'I' would try 'n kid a clever litt'l kid like youse?

CINDY: Well, how about them two half-sisters 'o mine. You sure fed them the twine.

PRINCEY: Aw, them. They ain't worth the powder they put on their pans, Honest, kid. I'm nuts about you, and nobody else 'cept you.

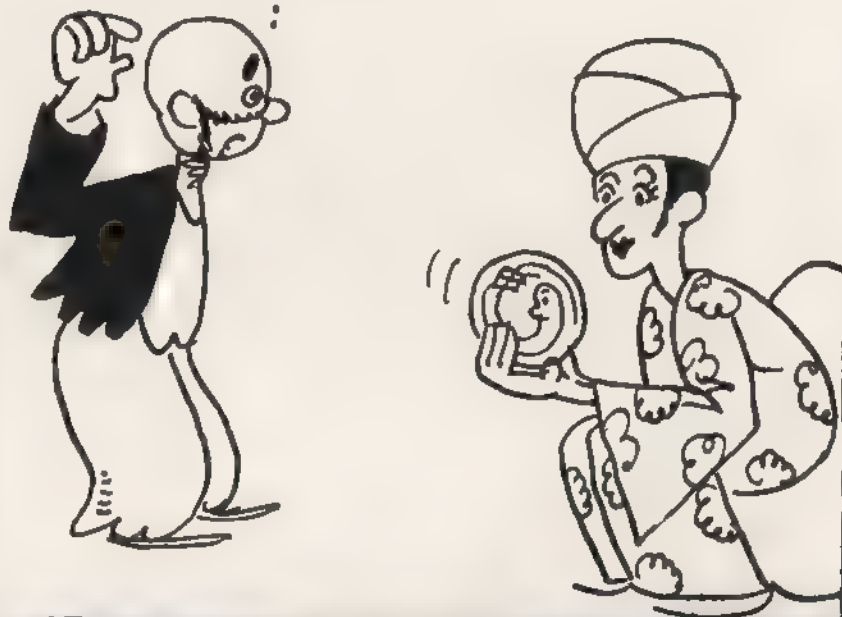
CINDY: How'r'ya goin' a prove it?

PRINCEY: Why you sweet little thing, how kin ya ask such a dumb question of me. (*passionately*) My darling little apples dumpling! (*more passionately*) My sugar coated pumpkin pie! (*quite passionately*) my beloved little—

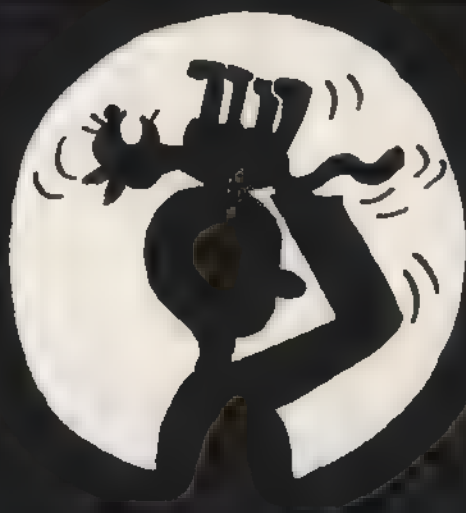
CINDY: Did you say pumpkin? My God, what time is it?

(*Continued to page 14*)

SWAMI WHAT
CAN I DO TO
MAKE MY
HAIR GROW?



THE SPIRITS SAY
IF YOU RUB A BLACK
PUSS WHERE YOU
WANT HAIR TO
GROW EVERY NIGHT
FOR THREE MONTHS
YOU WILL
GET YOUR
WISH



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SWAMI DOING
THAT DOES
GROW HAIR



BRUCE
PATTERSON



(Continued from page 12)

(And just then the clock struck twelve plunks. Doody Valloo and his orchestra struck up with Tiger Garment.) I gotta scram outa here! (She starts to run toward the door, the princey after her, when suddenly a shriek goes up. Cindy is just plain Cindy, but without the rags. The orchestra plays on and on wildly and more wildly. Cindy is frantic. The prince is romantic. He clasps her up in his arms madly)

PRINCEY: Now's the time to fall in love, so if you feel like being sweethearts forever, please tell me that you feel fit as a fiddle, and I'll take you away to that shanty in

old shanty town, and all my dreams will come true, so I'll never have to dream again. Howsabout it babe?

CINDY: Oh princey. Oh

(Without waiting a moment, the princey picks her up, amid jeers and cheers from the crowd, and dashes toward the steps that lead to the second floor)

Where are you taking me, princey darling? Where's the shanty?

PRINCEY: (rushing upward with her in his arms) Third floor back, babe. Any objections?

CINDY: ()! (And then Gay Lum-bago and his orchestra go into "So He Married the Girl.")



"I lost my eraser."

Drawn for 10-Story Book by Bruce Patterson.



On a spacious balcony just outside, as Hiram could see by looking past a pair of half-opened Florentine doors, distinguished looking men chatted with equally distinguished looking women.

The Sporting Chance

by Harold Ward

Illustration by Bob Gon, Jr.

HIRAM AKLEY and Martha Sneed had been "keeping company" for several months when Jabez Sneed's attempt to corner the agricultural implement market of Sac City terminated with disastrous results. When the wreckage was cleared away, Jabez found himself the owner of a house decorated with mortgages, a ledger filled with bad accounts and a pique against the world in general. Whereupon, he splattered his brains against one side of a newly

papered bedroom with an old Colt's revolver, and his creditors started fighting over his assets before the undertaker had finished his melancholy rites. He bequeathed to Martha his love, a thousand dollar insurance policy and a strain of sporting blood inherited from some long-forgotten progenitor.

In spite of the fact that Hiram was the village cut-up, Martha loved him with old-fashioned devotion. She would have married him in a minute had he said the

word. But, alas for her peace of mind, he never said it. Hiram, it was hinted, went to a leg—er—burlesque show every time he made his annual visit to New York to buy shoes for the Emporium, of which he was proprietor. Likewise, he oiled his hair, waxed his mustache, played penny-ante and chewed peppermint lozenges which, in Sac City, is *Prima facie* evidence that a man drinks whisky or eats onions. This accumulated mass of bucolic devilishness made Hiram the object of many a whispered conversation at sewing, society meetings and, incidentally, a man to be shunned by all Sac City maidens who hoped to preserve their unsullied reputations. Hence, Martha's association with Hiram ostracized her in Sac City and she found herself, upon the death of her father, alone in the world and seemingly doomed to a life of spinsterhood in a town where scandal-mongers make mountains out of mole hills over night.

Martha realized this. So did Hiram. In fact, he rather enjoyed his bad reputation. But Martha, being a wise damsel, knew, deep down in her heart, that Hiram was not, never had been and never would be a real, honest-to-gawd sport and she felt, if she once got the matrimonial hook in his gills, that she could straighten him up with a jerk. The trouble was to hook him. For Hiram was wise beyond his years and having broken her heart, as he supposed, turned his gaze towards a fluffy-haired blond from a nearby town.

If Martha had shriveled up and died of a dislocated heart, Hiram's cup of happiness would have been filled to overflowing; his reputation as a real gol darnit would have been made and all the girls in Sac City would have worked overtime flirting with him. But Martha was not an ordinary girl. She declined to shrivel. Besides, she was a regular reader of *Zippy Stories* and knew all the ropes. So while

the town gossips were busily engaged in raking skeletons out of the fluffy-haired blond's closet, she cashed her insurance policy, pocketed the money and slipped away.

A month after her disappearance, Hiram received a letter from her telling him that she was in New York working twenty-four hours a day as a model for Rolf Armstrong, Norman Rockwell and other artistic lights. Hiram sat up and took notice. He had never thought Martha especially beautiful, but he realized that possibly familiarity bred contempt. He dug her photograph, done by Sac City's best photographer, out of his bureau drawer and inspected it carefully. Yes, he decided, she was pretty. Strange that he had never noticed it before. All of the sporting blood within him surged to the surface. Hiram, too, read *Zippy Stories* and he knew that models are the alpha and omega of naughtiness. He expected to make his annual pilgrimage to the city within a few weeks and he felt that his acquaintance with Martha would allow him to open the muffler and hit the high places in a way to astonish the natives. She might even visit a cabaret with him and all the blase New Yorkers would point him out and ask each other who the handsome man was over there in the corner with the pretty little model.

Martha's next play brought Hiram up standing. She sent him a photograph, decolette, bearing Sarony's imprint, "Merely one of the number of little studies for magazine covers," she wrote. "For your own personal inspection, only, for people back home are *so* funny, you know." She also suggested that, as it was nearly time for his annual trip to the city, he pay her a visit while in New York. Then followed several pages of gossip in which she told of prominent authors, illustrators and actors she met

daily, of studio life and Bohemianism in general. Oh, Martha had Hiram going, all right. She knew that he would do just what he did do—seize the bit in his teeth, date his trip ahead two weeks and send her a wire that he was starting next day.

Hiram was so excited, upon his arrival, that he indulged in the unaccustomed luxury of a taxi and hastened to Martha's address. It was—or seemed to Hiram—a palace. An attendant in gorgeous raiment piloted him to an upper floor in a gilded cage, a dainty maid with a white cap and a French accent ushered him into Martha's presence. She was entertaining that evening, it seemed, for the apartment, half drawing room, half studio, was filled with people in evening dress. On a spacious balcony just outside, as Hiram could see by looking through a pair of half-opened Florentine doors, distinguished looking men chatted with equally distinguished looking women. Upon his entrance Martha gave a happy, excited little squeak and rushed towards him, arms outstretched, then, greetings over, she ushered him about the spacious room, introducing him to various celebrities of whom he had read—authors, artists, poets, musicians. Hiram was dazed. He gazed about the room, taking in the gold Spanish leather hangings, the rich curtains, the Sarouk rugs, the rich prints on the walls, the Sheraton chairs, after which he did some rapid mental arithmetic. Almost immediately the maid served refreshments from a tray and what Hiram took for an excellent grade of hard cider from a bottle. As the bubbles mounted to his head, he recovered rapidly from his bashfulness and in less than no time was cutting capers with Jake Lubert and Irvin Snobb. He even called David Selasco by his first name and danced a set with Lyndia Pinkham while Hank Wilstach played the piano. In fact, he

was "feeling his oats," as they say in Sac City, when the party broke up and the guests took their departure. At Martha's request he remained until they had gone.

"Now," she demanded, as she snuggled down beside him on the settee, "tell me all about yourself and the folks back home."

Hiram's answer was an attempt to fold her in his arms, but she gently repulsed his advances.

He was surprised. "Why, I thought," he blurted out, "that all models—"

"Were immoral," Martha interrupted. "Well, I'm not."

Hiram did some more rapid calculating. He appraised the furnishings, Martha's gown, everything. She had never looked so radiant to him before. He realized, all of a sudden, that he wanted her. It may have been the bubbles going to his head, but that has nothing to do with this story. He turned upon her suddenly.

"Then, how the dickens," he exclaimed, "did you pay for all these things? These here rooms must rent for near a hundred dollars a month."

"A hundred a week," she returned, lazily.

"And you've got a hired girl—"

"I only pay Felice thirty dollars a week, Hiram."

"Thirty dollars a week for a hired girl that can't hardly speak English!" he shouted. His eyes blazed. "Martha, are you making this money honestly?"

"What do you mean?" she returned angrily.

"Nothing, only I've heard how they treat models here in New York and—"

"They pay well."

"But, Martha, you hadn't ought to be here in the city all alone, exposed to the temptations and everything. And you are so darned pretty, too. Why didn't you

stay in Sac City and marry me?"

"Why, you never asked me, Hiram."

"Would you if I'd asked you?"

"I might have."

"Will you now?"

"There's a preacher lives down the street just a block," she answered, "and I've heard he keeps open all night, like everything else in New York."

Two days later, when the bubbles had cleared from Hiram's aching brain and he had completed his buying they were speeding homeward. For the first time since his arrival, he left her for a few minutes while he enjoyed a cigar in the smoking compartment. During his absence, she drew a small account book from her mesh bag and rapidly conned over the entries. They were itemized as follows:

Carfare to New York.....	\$ 50.00
Board for two months.....	100.00
Sarony (for photos)	50.00
Dresses	300.00
Shoes	50.00
Rent of apartment (two weeks).....	200.00
Felice's wages (two weeks).....	60.00
Twenty ham actors and actresses at \$2 each (to impersonate artists, authors, etc.)	40.00
Rent of dress suits for same.....	50.00
Refreshments (including champagne for Hiram)	50.00
Total	\$950.00

She leaned back and meditated. "Only fifty dollars left out of Dad's insurance. It's a good thing Hiram didn't postpone his trip until the usual time, or the money wouldn't have lasted. Well, it was a sporting chance and I took it." And she tossed the little book out of the open window.



"Oh I say, old thing, who's this person staring at us so deuced hard?"

"Why, Percy, I do believe that's the well-known Gentle Reader."

"By Jove, Mary, you don't say. Frightful looking egg, eh what?"

"Hush, Percy, the Gentle Reader might hear. Now, old dear, is the time for you to spring that joke that goes with this picture."

"Oh quite so, but upon my word, you know, the silly jest has quite slipped the old bean. I must tell the beggar that, eh what? Er—pardon this seeming familiarity, Gentle Reader, but—er—dunce take it—I've quite forgotten the bit of rot that I'm supposed to say, you know. Er—er—a thousand apologies and er—all that sort of thing, but I say, you know, it can't be helped. No need to pull the weeps after—er—the milk bucket is overturned, eh what? However, if you'll skim the old eagle eye over the other pages of this bally periodical, I'm quite sure you'll—er—find all sorts of chaff and fun no end—er—in the rest of this issue. Some of it quite top-hole, I assure you, so if you'll—er—er—yes—yes—quite so—cheerio—ta-ta."

Drawn by Vernon Tobias.

White Lie

by

Lester Weil

Illustration by L. Arnold Grigg.



ONLY great people can make great mistakes. I would have laughed, five years ago,—I would not have believed the great white doctor could be so very wrong that he could cure misery. But when his error brought a blessing to the hated *tabu* that is Pala O'Sheil, even the brown sorcerers of our island raised an eyebrow of scorn.

I was going through the grove of banyan trees to the pool under the little water fall when I first saw Althea. My head, heavy with sadness, was bowed or I would have seen her long before I stepped on her few clothes, all silk and shining, lying near the edge of the water.

Her face was turned from me as she stood where the cool water falling from the rocks splashed down on the round shells that were her breasts. Her skin was so white. I stepped behind a *miki* bush and breathed heavily like a man running. White! I looked at my own body that was like the shadows between night and day. Half-white! The curse of the gods of Rua Maluri, my mother—as for the God of my Irish father, He too would have none of me. Nor I of Him.

I do not know how long I watched Althea as she dived and jumped about and swam there. Not as strong in her motions as our brown girls. But quieter, softer.

Her shoulders drooped like the branches of the Tao, and were not straight and high like those of our island women. When she stood on a rock to dive her hips were slender like a young cocoa palm—but so white. No color but her hair—rust gold like the sun when it dips down in the sea.

The sweet smell of some strange scent was blowing through my head. Did these women from far away rub themselves with fragrant oils as did our girls? Could any perfume of her carry to me there? Then I knew. It was from her thin silk things that lay near my feet. I crept to them on my stomach so she would not see me—for being white she has learned to hide always the beauty of her body. They were green, these clothes, green as the baby leaves of the *hotu*, but when I raised the heap of them to my nose the scent made my heart beat in my chest like the beating of bells in Father Benadotte's mission. My brain was dancing as when I drink much *kava*. I buried my face in their soft smoothness.

The blood of Rua Maluri races through my flesh; had I stayed another moment the white men would have killed me for I was crazed enough for any folly. But I ran, ran as though ten devils were at my back. Nor did I stop until I had climbed high up into the mountain of Harnoa, where my hut is hidden like the nest of the little green dove. Where I can look down at last on the tiny valley and on the brown and white men who look down on me when I am with them.

I could not rest. All night that sweet smell was blowing in my head as I rolled on my mat. Next day I was down at the pool at the same time waiting for her—but she did not come. On the day after I awoke trembling and told myself I would not go. Yet I was there waiting, early in

the morning. At last she came slowly to the edge of the stream, let her clothes slip off and fall at her feet, then stepped over them to slip into the cooling waters. When she saw me running to her she swam with much splashing to the other side of the pool. . . . But the race was short. As she reached the rocks on the other side I caught her tiny foot and pulled her back. Putting my arm around her waist I swam back with her to the bank. She tried to beat my face with her hands; that only made me laugh wildly. She was so short of breath and choked with water she scarce could scream.

Up the hills I scrambled with her sparkling body over my shoulder, jumping from rock to rock. She was so light and tiny. When finally we reached my bamboo hut I set her down on a mat of scarlet cocoanut fibre; she sat up with tears running down the sides of her nose.

"They will kill you for this," she said, looking at me for the first time.

"You are right," I answered, "but it does not matter."

Then I got some figured *tapa* cloth, tore off a large piece and gave it to her to make a *pareu*. Eagerly she seized it and tied it in folds about her waist. . . .

Most of the day she sat there in silence, only looking at me when I turned my eyes away from her. I put foods before her—taro, cocoanut meat, and a shell of *poi poi*—but she would touch none of it. She seemed to be lost in her thoughts, planning perhaps to get back to the valley. I asked her questions, who she was, why she was on our island, her name. She only shook her head and stared around the little hut with her wide eyes, green-gray as the mists of early morning. I was sorry for her, yet no power could have swayed me to take her back.

(Continued to page 22)



Lynn Browning

—a Warner Brothers beauty, who has appeared before, and on the cover of this red-jacketed magazine.

Warner Brothers Photo

(Continued from page 20)

"You like music?" I asked, as the evening was coming. Without answer I got my guitar that my father had left me and sang for her all the native songs I knew. She seemed to rest easier then, perhaps she was no longer afraid I would roast her; perhaps she could hear in my songs how I was lonesome, lonesome—always so alone.

As darkness wrapped us she watched my every move, her eyes followed me while I lit some strings of candle-nuts hanging from the cross poles. At last she spoke.

"Play some more, please," she said.

Her voice went into me like a knife, yet it was soft and pleasing. Something like a bird sound, only so very sad. Like a sadness that had been over her a long time. I sat with my legs under me and picked from the strings all the songs I knew. A few bits of the white man's songs, too. She was thinking while she listened; I could feel the poor little thoughts flowing through her mind. We people of the island of Motu Nova have always taken our women, but the Irish in me was tearing at my heart. One by one the candle-nuts dropped their black ashes on the mats and fluttered out. As the last one threw shadows across our faces she drooped like a weary puppy and lay down. There was all darkness and I could hear nothing but her breath, like a wind sighing among the palms. Out under the stars I walked through the night, asking questions of the strange God of my father.

In the morning she spoke to me. "What shall I call you," she said.

"My name is Pala O'Sheil," I replied. She opened her eyes in surprise.

"You see, my father was Irish," I added, "only my mother was of here."

"They call me Althea," was all she said.

But she ate heartily when I brought foods and roasted a little fish for her. She began to talk as she ate and seemed no longer afraid. I knew she was thinking of how to get away and her friendliness was to fool me. Sometimes I even caught her smile and although I knew she was pretending, yet it made me very glad. After breakfast I went off in the thickets as though I were leaving but quickly came back and hid behind a pandanus tree to watch her. Althea sat quietly for a long time. When at last she went into the hut she came out with a piece of printed cloth thrown over her pearly shoulders and looked around slowly. She had put on a pair of my sandals, but as they were much too large for her delicately shaped feet she had tied them on with some yellow reeds. I followed quietly as she darted down the mountain path around the rocks. After letting her get along a little way I appeared suddenly before her.

"Oh, I was just looking for some water," she said as she stopped.

"I—I wanted to wash."

"Very well," I answered, "I will take you to a stream nearby. It is not very different from that other one. And I should like to bathe, too."

With a laugh I picked her up and carried her to where the mountain was split apart and where white waters splashed and swirled and dropped downward on their way to the valley. There were many large stones in the stream rounded smoothly by the rushing water. I showed Althea how to slide down in the current over and around them. Soon she was laughing too. Then we would creep out to the bank and walk up the hill together, to come whirling down again, she behind me, her tiny toes poking into my back, when at last she would fall in a heap on

top of me as we slid over a bit of a falls into a pool below it.

Wearied after a while we stretched lazily on the bank and looked up into the drooping leaves of a breadfruit tree.

"And why do the natives hate you," Althea asked.

"Because my mother was *tabu*," I answered. "She was not allowed to have a child. She was a *taupo* in the village, a kind of sacred person, you know, whom no man may marry or even look upon with eyes of desire. They hate me, too, because I will not tatoo my face and body as they do." I could feel blood warming my face as Althea looked over the whole large length of me.

"You were right," she said, and then added, "You will take me back, won't you?"

I looked at her. Something in her face made me want terribly to touch it.

"Althea," I started, stumbling on my words, "I have never been happy before." It seemed I was drowning in those gray-green eyes; the wind blew a wisp of bronze hair across her mouth.

"Poor lonely Pala," she whispered. And she smiled and put her little hand slowly over mine, as though half afraid still.

"Tomorrow I will take you to the valley," I told her. It hurt me to say it, I would rather have let the shark sink his teeth over my whole right arm. But I could not bear to make Althea sad, as I was. Then she crept to me and put her warm wet lips on my cheek and warm drops of water splashed down on my face from hers. As I held her my throat choked my breath. I could say no words.

That night was cruelly bitter sweet. I can still see her as she sat under the tiny torches, eyes shining with the thought of going back to her people in the morning, her face pink and smiling.

When I could forget the day to come I was filled with a burning joy. I played and Althea sang with me; her voice was clear and tender. And I told her long tales of the islands, of the battles and glories of my mother's people, great fighters, all of them.

"What is it, Pala?" she asked once when I had slipped into my sad thoughts again.

"I wish I could die tomorrow," I answered, "life is heavy on me—it is not good."

She looked at the mats and was still. When she spoke I could not believe her.

"I wish I were dead, too, Pala," she said. "Some things are worse. If you only knew——"

"But you have all things," I cried to her, "all the great gifts of my father's people. You are white. White people could not be unhappy." Althea laughed quietly in a strange way.

"Come, Pala, at least we have tonight for singing."

And she began to sing fast little songs from across the seas with funny quick words. Soon I was trying to remember these songs—and forget that I was Pala.

They came for us just after dawn. The whites stayed outside and let the natives crawl up to the hut—no trouble in getting plenty who hated me enough—and they stank of the rum the whites had poured into them. For I carry my mother's *tabu*, they would never harm me unless bribed and driven, I who am kept apart for the revenge only of the gods. Althea's people took her, while the screaming islanders bound me with ropes of bamboo fibres. Then down the mountain—with me trussed up on crossbars and held aloft to be chanted at madly all the way to keep my evil spirit from strik-

ing them down. Althea did not come near me.

Back in the village I was slung up from the beams of the Ti, the long hut of sacred rites and weapons, where feet of women have never entered. All day the drums beat; rum and kava flowed. All day the dancing grew wilder while the white men winked and let the forbidden rites go on. All day they laughed hideously in my ears, while I stared sullenly at spears and knives thrust at my face with all their screeching. At last came darkness and the great fires.

I was not afraid to die. If only they would have shot me, decently. But there is an old law among our people, that to prevent a *tabu* from having revenge after death you must eat his brain. Yet I could not believe the whites would allow the old slow ritual of roasting to go on. The drums beating and beating in my ears was maddening. . . .

As the moon came up outside the Ti where I was hanging, every one of the warriors was out there dancing fiercely around the fire; I knew they would come for me soon now—I was in a kind of stupor, but all I wished for was to have it over as quickly as possible. I heard a noise from the back of the hut as though a dog were trying to squeeze in through the upright stalks of the wall. Looking down I saw a shoulder push through.

"Althea!" I cried in a hoarse whisper, as her face, all pale and frightened, came through the opening. "You must not come here!"

She ran to me, climbed on one of the bamboo logs that was used as a headrest, and slashed at my bindings with a sharp knife.

"Be still, Pala," she whispered, "and listen quickly."

"But this place is *tabu*, Althea. They will kill you too if they catch you."

"The devil with their sacred tabus!" she went on as she kept cutting at my ropes. In a few moments she had sawed through all of them and I was on the ground stiff and reeling.

"Listen quickly, Pala," she went on, "a canoe is waiting for you at the second little bay past the government store. It is filled with everything you will need."

She pushed a paper bag in my hand; it was heavy.

"If they get close to you, pull the iron pegs out of these and throw them. No one will be able to follow you for they will be blinded by the gas. But keep far from the fumes yourself."

Before I could answer she pulled my head down, kissed my lips quickly and was off, wriggling her small body through the opening in the back of the hut.

I looked at the balls of tin in the bag. They were strange to me but I had heard of this new weapon of the white man. They had been used on Coulaio against the natives during a revolt of the copra workers. As I crawled quietly to the doorway I repeated Althea's words. "Pull out the iron peg, throw them and run." Ah, yes—but it would take more than this miracle to get through those howling devils.

Creeping on my stomach I squirmed my way to the outer circle of their fires. Their senses are unbelievably sharp, only their drunkenness could keep me from being seen or heard by at least one of them. Yet I believe I would have gotten past had they not gone in to bring me out to the flames. Then followed a terrific yelling while they scattered about looking and listening. As a few of them got close enough to reach I pulled the pin from one

(Continued to page 26)

"Group
of
Screen Stars"

although who they are you'll
hatter figger out yourself.
Maybe they're just stars as
wot is going subsequently to
be sich.

Seibelman Photo.



(Continued from page 24)

of the tin balls and threw it into the group with all my strength. The effect was magical; I felt like shouting, my body was strong again. I did not stop long to watch them scream and writhe with pain as they were choked and blinded but ran on as fast as I could through the tangled vines and umbrella ferns. But I was not yet clear of them. Somehow a new group got through the gas; they now knew which way I was running. And they began to gain on me rapidly for I was not yet entirely well from the binding ropes, nor had I food or water since the night before. When they were almost upon me, I feared I too would be blinded if I threw another ball. Yet I pulled the peg and let them have it, closing my eyes and holding my breath as I struggled to get away from the gas. I stumbled and fell on my face, expecting to feel them pounce on me. But their screams told me I was now safe, so I crawled out of danger of the fumes and hurried as fast as possible to the bay.

The outrigger canoe was drawn up on the beach in the little cove and Althea had put plenty of food and water in it. Pushing off and jumping in I paddled out past the surf breakers, deciding meanwhile to head up the shore toward the tiny island of Takarao, which is rich in breadfruit trees as well as mango, limes and taro. After tonight I felt sure my people would never trouble me again; the gas must have seemed a just punishment to them for breaking the *tabu* that protected me. My thoughts were interrupted by the sight of another canoe which suddenly put out from a small bay just ahead of me. Someone was trying to head me off; I still had two gas balls left so I snatched one and set myself to land it in the other canoe when it came close

enough. My hand was drawn back. . . . I heard a voice shout, "Pala!"

"Althea!" I cried, my voiced filled with wild happiness.

I thought she had paddled out to say goodbye; instead she made me help her into my boat, fasten the other at the stern while she sat in the bow and helped me paddle.

"Do not talk with me about it now," she threw over her shoulder. "Tomorrow you will take me—where I will tell you, but now get away quickly."

I did not understand, but together we pushed on, resting when we needed, till the dawn found us at Takarao.

Althea was strangely quiet. She kept her eyes away from me and stared down the hill through the trees, down there in the still water of the lagoon where our canoes were drawn up on the sand. We had finished our breakfast of fruits and cocoanut milk.

"Are you too weary to take me there—before the sun goes down?" she asked.

"I am very tired. Where, Althea?"

She was silent. Then she seemed to be talking to herself.

"Oh, it is worse than death—if only I could die now. But the great doctor said it would come slowly."

"What is it, Althea—what cloud is over you?" I took her hand. She pulled it away from me trembling.

"When you are rested, Pala," she whispered, "you will take me to . . . Pokinaru."

"The leper colony!" I gasped. I can see her now shaking her head in terror, green eyes wide against the paleness of her skin. Her lips moved repeating my words. Scarcely can I recall what I did or said. . . . she must have thought me quite mad.

"For the love of God have pity on me, Pala!" . . .

Then I found myself on my knees,

praying for the first time to the One I had cursed. And in my thankfulness, my eyes that had burned in dry scorn before the tortures of my people were wet with tears. And I did not care.

"Can't you see, dear Althea," I said at last as I put my arms around her, "our shadows have met and vanished—we are in the sun now."

She seemed not to hear. "Why do you think I came to these islands?" she mumbled. When they read my note at the mission they will know too. I could not tell them, I hoped and hoped it was not so." Her voice was dull. "They will be glad to have me out of the way. Yes—tonight you must take me—there."

"I swear I will kill myself if you go," I cried. "Oh, I love you so!"

"I, too, Pala—that is why we go to Pokinaru tomorrow."

"Tomorrow has never come, it is always today."

"I will make you hideous. Your fine strong body—ah no."

"We have souls—one can live forever

in one sweet month—a year perhaps." I lifted her small form in my arms.

"Your lips burn me dear Pala, but it is the kiss of death."

"Of life, Althea. Come, we will pull candle-nuts for our altar. When I bring Pere Benadotte here tomorrow he will say, 'Ah, my boy, have I not always said you would come to the faith of your father?' And the good priest will laugh."

"Perhaps, Pala," she whispered as she pressed her lips to my ear, "we too can laugh then—a little while."

"Look!" I cried, and I turned her toward the sea. A school of porpoises were playing about on the top of the waters close in to the shore, which is ever an omen of good fortune.

Only great people can make great mistakes. I would have laughed five years ago — I would not have believed the great white doctor could be so very wrong that he could cure misery. But when his error brought a blessing to the hated *tabu* that is Pala O'Sheil, even the brown sorcerers of our islands raised an eyebrow of scorn.



"Rupert, since we've been on the pier, I've noticed several girls smile at you. I suppose you're not assuming your 'single man' swagger, are you?"

What the Woman Did by Freda Sumerfield



Illustration By Carl Link

SHE lay on a crimson rug all in silky white, her midnight eyes closed, her glorious hair unbound. She was dead!

Seated close by were two men. One, crumpled back in his chair, moaned her name ceaselessly — despairingly. The other, leaning forward, kept burning eyes fixed upon the beautiful motionless form.

But a few hours past she had been the essence of life—the allurements of pulsing womanhood. Madly merry—ravish-

ingly lovely—tempting, retreating, bewitchingly beseeching, she had spun the moment in the web of her charm.

How those slender arched feet had danced over the bare studio floor! How her perfectly moulded body had kept in the rhythm, with the abandon of motion but the exquisiteness of grace.

And the star-gleam in her eyes; the flowering smile upon her red parted lips; the constant fluttering movement of her soft white hands.

And then, faster and faster—still faster until the madness of it made one's eyes ache and one's pulse beat to bursting with the passion of it all.

Now music! She was playing for them, her treasured old violin cuddled close against her panting breasts. The heart-beat of the world! The destructive mirth of the uncaring—oh, how the wild notes grew. The jeers, the curses, the poison of unlawful caresses!

The losing battle of the weak — the helpless pain of the poor—the tears of the unloved swelled with the volume of her melody. The piercing agony of remorse—the tortured cry of the trapped—the shrill battle cry of revenge—and, finally, the haunting desolation of a damned soul.

Their hearts squeezed with the ache of it; they had begged her to stop.

So abruptly she had broken into song, her violin still hugged to her rounded bosom, her eyes, darkly dilated, staring into the sombre dusk.

Clear, true—strong and beautiful rose her voice, reaching out and out and out—and dying away like the whisper of a dead love.

Silence held them. The woman stood in the same position, her eyes strangely heavy. And a small smile tipped her mouth. A single word formed her lips. Twice she made the effort and then into the quiet of the room came her whispered: "Done!"

He of the burning blue eyes sucked in his breath and made as though to rise. But the other one laughed—not understanding.

"Give us some tea," he drawled, stretching lazily. "You rather overdid yourself, Marise. "I feel tearful."

She only moved her head. The flaming fire of her eyes startled him.

"Tea! . . . My God!" Sudden shrill laughter broke from her, but ere it had found sound she crashed face downward to the floor.

And they picked her up dead.

"Say something," cried he who had owned her body.

"Keep still!" muttered he who had sold her soul.

"Oh, why should she have wished to die," whimpered on the first. "If I only knew! If I only knew! Oh, God! It is too cruel. I loved her well. That she should leave me so! Oh, God, why did she do it? Why? Why?"

The smoldering blue eyes never left the still face of the dead woman. "Damnation! Be still!"

"I can't! I won't!" was the wild answer. "I must talk or go mad!"

"Fool!" the other replied brutally. "You snivel like a hurt brat. Will questions bring her back?"

"No—no! I can't believe it. It is one of her pranks. She is not dead! She is not! She is not!" And with a shuddering gasp he fell on his knees by the quiet form and lavished wild caresses upon the cold lips.

"She is dead!" came with remorseless distinctness from the other. "Even as she danced the poison was eating out her heart."

"My God, stop!" shrilled the kneeling man, hiding his face in his hands.

In a moment he arose and went reeling from the room and the sound of his feet padded up the stairs. Then came the dull thud of a door.

Then the other moved for the first time. A sound that was like that of a beast of the jungle in pain escaped his writhing lips as he fell to the floor by the side of the woman. . . .

(Continued to page 31)



Manasse Photo, Vienna, via Century Photos.

Berta Kicreck

—dancer, of Vienna, Austria, who does her inimitable dance between four lions, seated on high chairs at each corner of her stage.

(Continued from page 29)

To the man upstairs the thought was born that perhaps she had left a message—a letter of farewell. He stopped his aimless pacing of the room and began to search her desk with shaking hands. Contents of drawers and pigeonholes were gone through with frantic haste and for the second and third times, but no slightest word was found.

With a burst of rage he swept all to the floor, sobbing and cursing at the same time.

And then he saw conspicuously placed on a small side table, propped against her photograph, an envelope addressed to him in her characteristic scrawl.

His arm shot out and swept it up even as his fingers ripped out the letter. He read:

"You have just come from my dead body. I, who amused you am no more. I will never again dance to the mad merry strains of the violin—nor sing in the passionate fullness of the night. I will never laugh nor weep! My lips are cold and my eyes dull. The body you bought is worthless! For the bruised soul of it has gone.

"Wherever I am out in the great eternity I am watching you as you read this. And I am glad! I've long wanted to die—and today I am dead.

"God! How I've hated you and hated you and *hated you*. How I laugh as I write this. Dead! The truth from the dead! How many times did you kiss me? Remember well! for you took a full measure of hate and loathing with each!

"You bought my body—you fool! But what of my soul? It went down to hell!

"And he who sold me . . . your friend! Your friend, you say? A secret with the dead, fool. He fleeced you! You paid heavily for my body. Oh, fool! . . .

"Take that sharp knife lying near—creep softly down the stairs—steal into the room where I was . . . there kneels the other and he holds the body you bought close in his arms . . . and upon my breast you will find the stain of his kiss.

"Will you go, fool? Will you go? I am dead! And he kisses my breast."

An awful word escaped the man's grey lips. Madness coursed poison-swift through his veins. The *knife*—the stairs were gained without a bead of sound—the room was entered before the count of ten. A startled curse broke from the other's lips as he stumbled to his feet.

Then he saw the knife.

"Fool!" he shouted. "Keep away!"

"Did—you—kiss—her?" came a mere thread of a voice.

"No—no! I swear it! I—" he broke off shuddering. He saw death.

Leaning down the man swept aside the loose bodice. A purple mark glowed on the marble bosom.

"Liar!" and the knife shot out with the hand of frenzied hate and found the other's heart.

He stood a bare fraction. Then terror tightened each feature. Both hands beat the air as he lurched sideways. The scream of realization strangled horribly. He spun once around before plunging heavily to the floor. . . .

Bells were ringing. For the New Year. Shrill whistles and sound of revelry burst upon the air.

Did an inscrutable expression mould the dead woman's features? Was it satisfaction? Had she meant it so—had she planned it so? Was it her revenge? A love which gave all sold into shame. Outraged, betrayed, relentlessly pursued—had she cunningly dug the pitfall for destruction?

One murdered—one blasted!

And the dead woman lying between—still and beautiful — her long hair unbound, her hands folded meekly across her pulseless breast.

Did she smile?



Illustration By C. O. Longabaugh.

I PAUSED, my cup to my lips. It seemed impossible that this healthy, rosy cheeked man who smiled at me across the little restaurant could be Henry Livermore, the physical wreck I parted with some five years before. But it was; and I found my hand caught in a grip of iron as he dropped into a chair opposite me loudly demanding news of my wanderings.

"But you?" I gasped as I took in his appearance of abundant good health. "Why man! you were dying when I last saw you. Even the most sanguine specialists scarcely gave you a year and now—"

"And now I look younger than you, eh? And feel younger too, I'll warrant. Yes! and I'll look younger still," he went on, banging the table. "I am slowly dyeing my gray hair black. Then I'll be forty instead of sixty. Look it and feel it. It will be the old, wild life over again with a hearty laugh on the Devil and his friends—the doctors." He laughed boyishly, throwing back his head in sheer enjoyment at my amazement.

"You certainly are in the pink of condition," I admitted. Then the wonder of the thing struck me.

"Tell me about it?" I questioned eagerly.

Henry Livermore leaned far back in his chair; blew large rings of smoke towards the ceiling; regarded them in thought, then tossing away the stub, lit another large black cigar, which years since had been forbidden. After regarding my bewilderment with keen satisfaction he announced, with some pride, that he had discovered the secret of life.

"The doctors all gave me up," he told me. "I think there were ten of them—all told. My heart was bad. My liver; well, I doubt if more than two admitted I possessed a liver. But all agreed, and some offensively, that my life had been one mad debauch; that I had played fast and loose with death and was some ten years over my time. There was one particularly offensive old quack, a nasty weazened little fellow that I had crossed in love in my younger days. 'You've had all the thrills in life,' he croaked. 'Now

you're going to die; die horrible. There is one thrill left—if you've got the nerve to take it.' And do you know, Charlie, my lad, the little scoundrel had the bad taste to open his window. There was no misunderstanding him. His office was on the fourteenth floor."

He shook his shoulders in horror at the recollection. Then he laughed.

"Saw him this morning—upon honor, Charlie. It took ten years from his life when he saw the playful way I prodded him with my stick."

"But how did you do this?" I brought him back to the subject.

"Began to think. Like all big minds, mine is most active under great stress. What a terrible thing it would be for me to lie down and die. No, no, I couldn't do it. It wouldn't be the expected thing. I could name a dozen ladies who would take to their bed at the thought of it. I must go out like a candle. Quick and sudden with perhaps an air of mystery about it. Jumping from a building—well, that had its good points, to be sure. But my looks; I believe I may say without conceit that I am somewhat handsome." He paused a moment, stroked his chin a bit then continued.

"These thoughts of death; you might think were brought about by melancholia. Quite the contrary, they afforded me much pleasure. They thrilled me and so great was the fascination that I reached home without the aid of a stick.

"By the time I reached my study I had decided to take my life and had chosen the way, together with some little notes I would leave behind me. A dozen letters to some dear ladies with my love and devotion—that was all. These letters I sent my man out to mail. Unfortunately several ladies fainted before breakfast the following morning.

"Taking my revolver from my drawer,

I entered my bedroom and sat before the mirror of my dressing table. The mirror before me and the revolver held tightly under my left ear, I prepared to watch my own death.

"As I watched myself I experienced surprise that the usual pallor of my face had given away to a faint touch of color. My heart missed a beat—gave sudden, spasmodic jumps, as I watched the hammer rise to the tightening of my finger. Ah! But that was a moment. Every muscle in my body vibrated. A part of my leg which had been lifeless for months began to feel the rush of blood. Imagine it, Charlie. I was watching quick and sudden death—and that death was mine.

"I pressed harder. Saw the hammer rise then fall with a sharp click. With that click a tremor shook my entire body. I was a new man. I had often played with death—but this time I had challenged death and won.

Later I discovered that two bullets were missing from the revolver. Still I had given death the odds three to two and won. I won't go so far as to say that I was a well man at once, but I was a new one and within a year I was—as you see me now."

He threw his arms wide apart and tipping his chair far back against the wall awaited my admiration.

"Within a year you were a well man," I repeated slowly. Then the meaning of his words struck me. "You don't mean; you can't mean—"

"That I have played the same game since," he took the words out of my mouth. "Yes, I've played it since—a hundred times or more. Sometimes with one bullet—then again with three and once with four," he barely whispered this as he leaned across the table. "That was a night, Charlie," he continued, his eyes

alight, "but I was like a boy after it. You see, I needed a new thrill. The old ones had long lost their charms, their powers."

"You don't mean to say that you go on with this?"

"I do." He tapped me on the shoulder. "You are the only one who knows and of course I trust my secret with my old and tried friend."

"Of course," I gulped, "but you are well again. There will be no need to continue with such—" I halted and looked for a word.

"Flirting with death is what I call it," he laughed. "Yes, and I'll have to keep at it till the devil holds the winning hand. If you look at the whole thing in a serious way, Charlie, my lad, you'll see that it couldn't cure my heart or my liver. I live on the excitement alone. Sometimes when a bad spell comes on I sit in front of the mirror for an hour or more. I put in one bullet, give the barrel a twist, then wait. If the thrill don't come I put in two. Later perhaps three. It takes nerve I tell you, to press that trigger. I had three in this morning. That's what makes me feel so chipper." He finished with pride.

That was my first talk with Henry Livermore, but not my last. He took my remonstrances good-naturedly and laughed at my many objections to the forcible means he had adopted as a cure.

Later he became irritable and in silent tactful consent we avoided the subject.

His spirits would rise and fall, during the next few months, so I seemed to know almost to the hour when he faced the gun opposite the mirror.

At last I formed a scheme to save my friend and when I discovered that he was "flirting with death," on the average of once a week, I decided to put my plan to the test without further delay. Henry

had informed me that he never broke open his gun to see how close he had been to death. It was his habit to turn the barrel, leave the gun in its accustomed place till he next sat before the mirror. He would then remove the bullet or bullets for a "fresh start."

I had had some bullets made which exactly resembled his forty-fours both in size and weight, but they were harmless and would produce no more noise than the click of an empty chamber.

"Harry," I said to him one day at lunch, "I have become somewhat fascinated with this game of yours. Not that I wish to try it," I added hastily as he gave me a shrewd glance. "But I would like to see the thing done—just once." I shivered as I spoke the words and the shiver was not a piece of acting.

"Honor bright: You'd like to see it done. No interference, mind."

His delight at my interest overcame any suspicion that he might have entertained before I assured him that I would watch in silence.

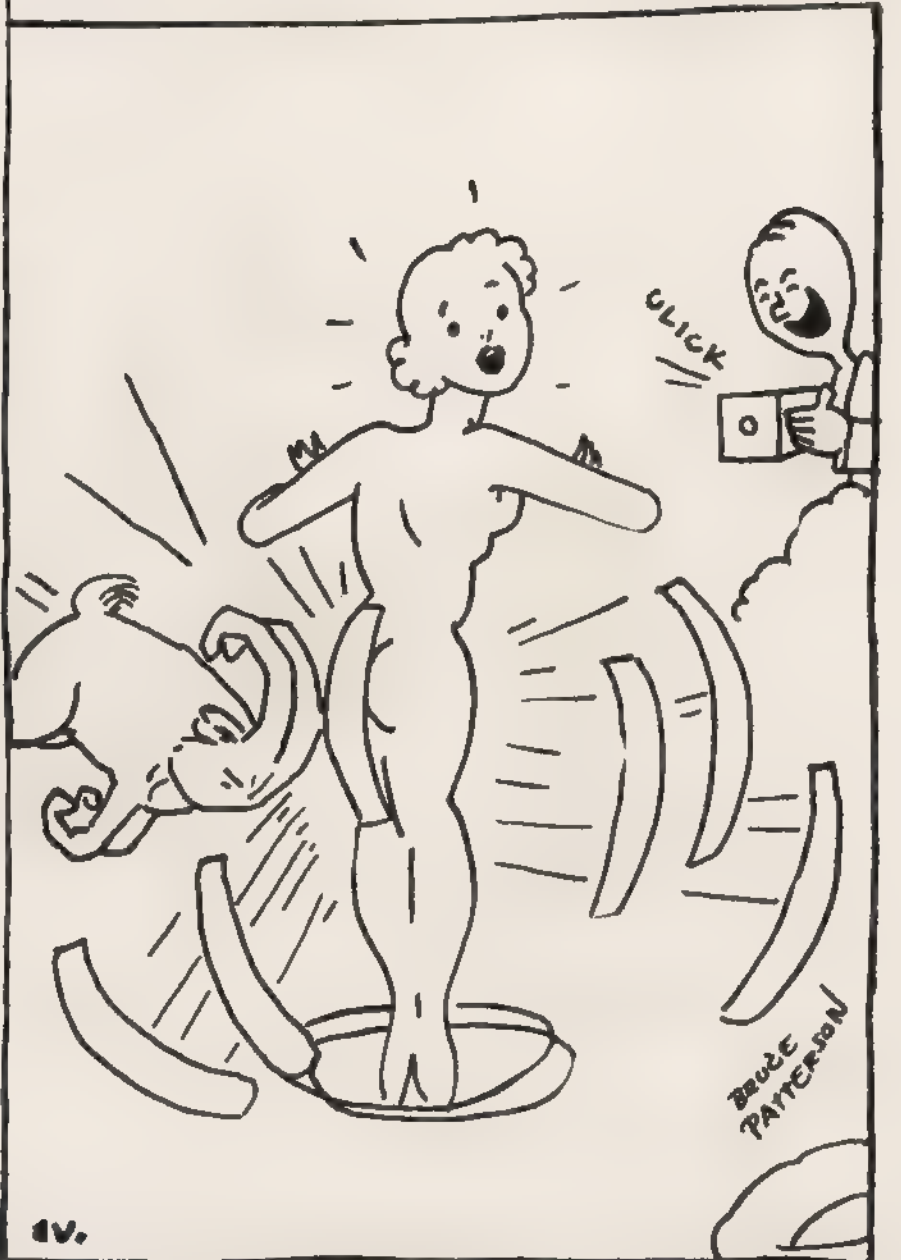
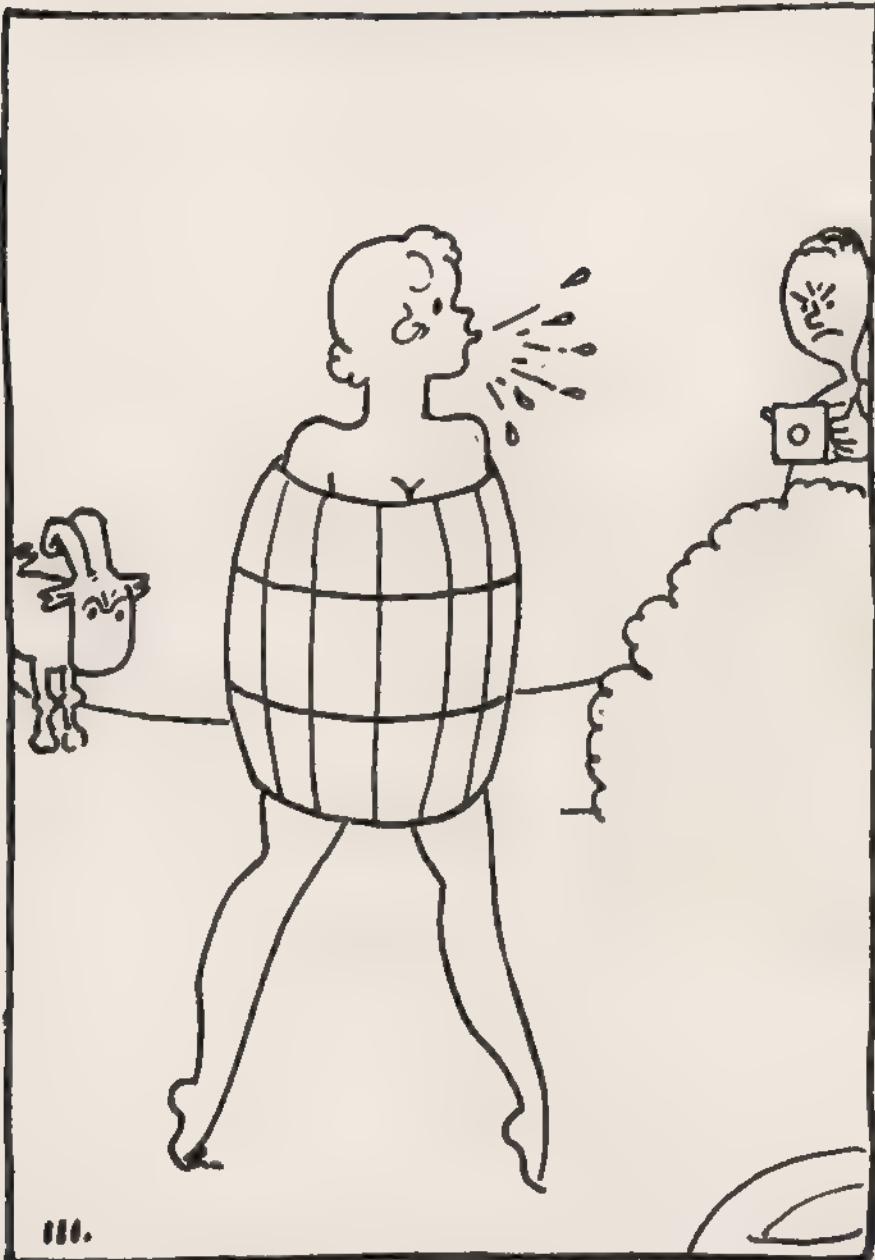
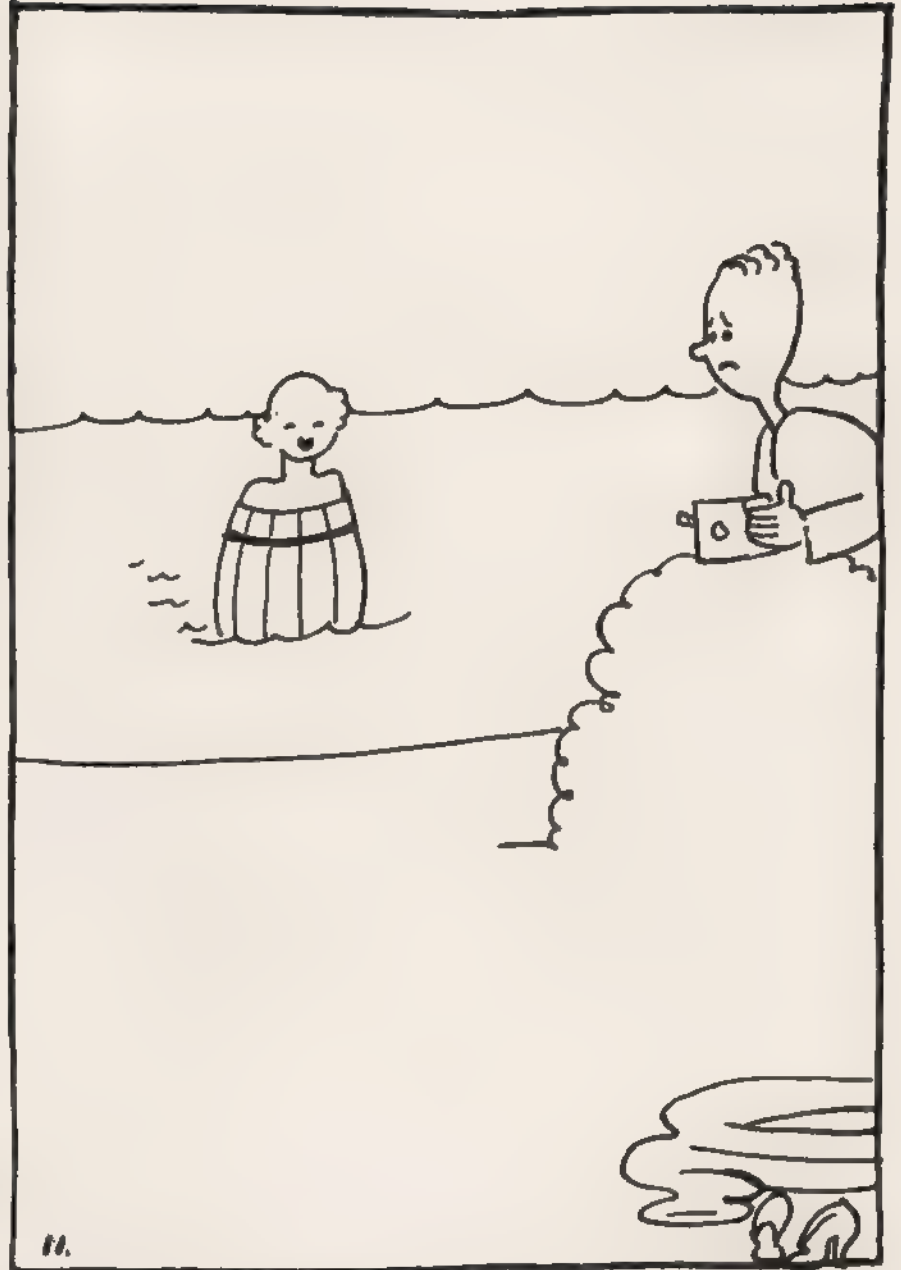
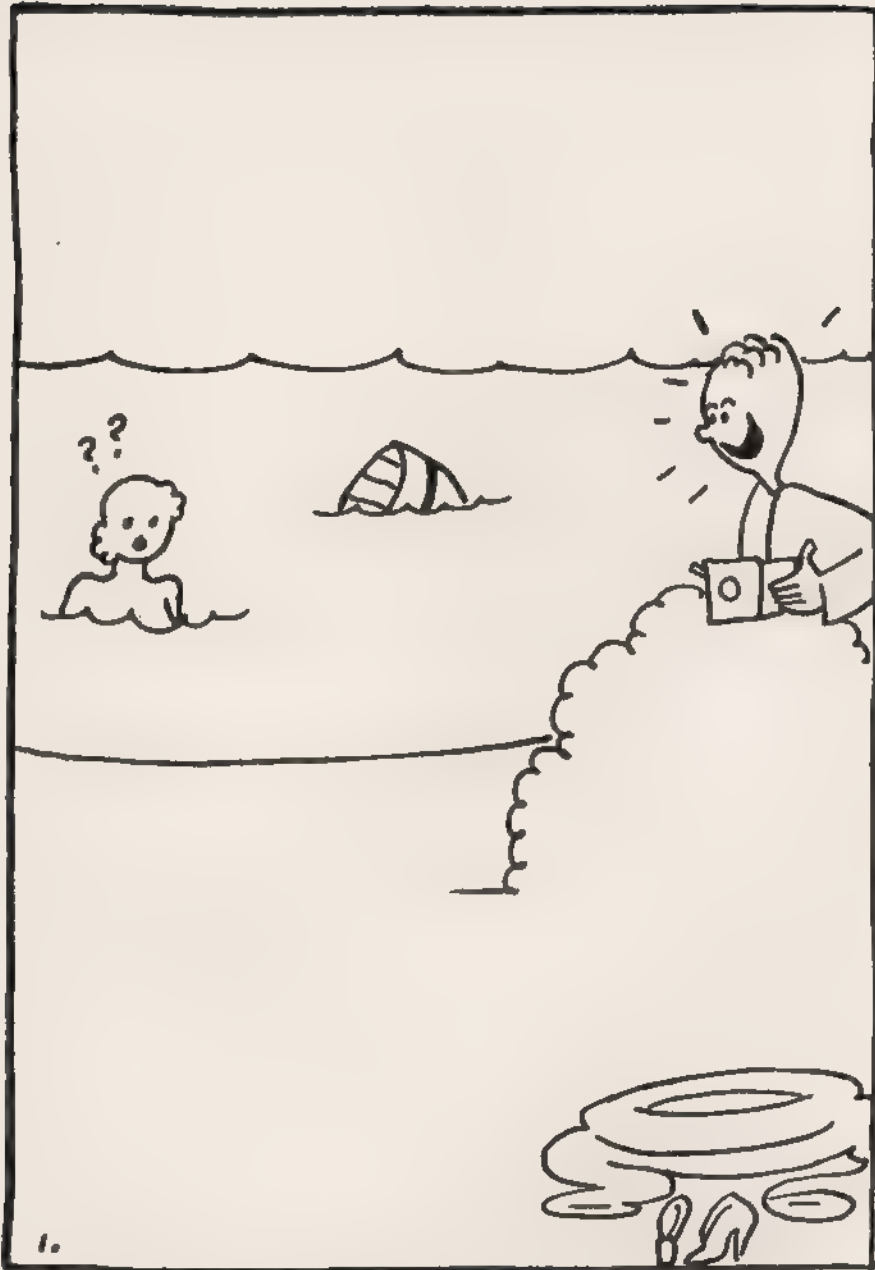
A week later I dined at his apartment. After the meal he dismissed the man-servant, announcing his willingness to satisfy my desire to see him fight his silent duel with the Devil.

"Would you do this thing to-night—anyway?" I questioned, nervously.

"I don't know," he knitted his brows. "I feel a bit bad and it will take but one bullet to do the trick."

I was about to suggest delay—but only one bullet, Four to One. Surely he would come through safely after so many attempts. It would be his last risk—and so well was his little room guarded that I might never receive the opportunity of placing the imitation bullets. It seemed my only chance. I felt sure that after the

(Continued to page 36)



(Continued from page 34)

excitement I could very easily make the change. Four to One. I let things take their course.

His hand was steady and his eye clear as he placed a bullet in the pistol. A quick turn of the barrel, then he seated himself before the mirror, placing the revolver close behind his ear.

The sensations I experienced as I peered over his shoulder and into the glass are not describable.

Henry Livermore worked the hammer up and down slowly, his eyes steadfast upon his own shining orbs in the mirror. He seemed to have forgotten my presence entirely. His whole body trembled be-

neath the hand I held upon his shoulder.

Entranced, I watched the finger which worked the trigger. It paused a moment, then tightened. Slowly, oh, so slowly, the hammer rose—and I knew that this was the period between life and death.

I raised my head and looked into the glass—looked full into the eyes of my friend.

A loud report shook the room and in that mirror I saw a soul go straight to hell.

That is all, gentlemen of the jury. It is unfortunate that I am the beneficiary under the will. I can but say, that if you convict me of murder an innocent man goes to the chair.



HE: "What did Ethel have when she lost that strip poker game last night?"

SHE: "A royal flush."



Billy and Ruth were, allegedly, "nice" girls, Billie only 17 and Ruth not much older. They got along fine, except when they quarrelled—which was about 99.99 per cent of the time.

Graveyard Shift by Fern Scates, Jr.

Picture by Peony Patsygirl

THE telephone on Ham Eason's desk rang steadily. He pecked on at the battered typewriter: "Governor Stanook said further: 'These malicious lies and gross misstatements are simply a vicious attempt on the part of my political enemies to discredit the administration, and—'"

"Answer that damned telephone!"

Ham glared across the room at the new city editor. "A goddam upstart," he thought. Grudgingly he picked up the telephone. "What do you want?"

It was his wife. "Listen, Ham; I want you to come home early to-night . . ." Miss Lawrence grinned derisively from the next desk. "Wish she wouldn't holler so loud," he thought. I'm going out in the country to spend the night with Pearl, and you will have to stay with the kids. You understand?"

"Yeah. All right, Emma," he agreed.

"I want you to come right on home, now. The kids will be scared after dark. I'm leaving right now."

(Continued to page 39)



It's
"All-
Wool
Hair

—and a yard long," for it
makes a bodice and a belt
besides.

Warner Brothers Photo.



(Continued from page 37)

"O. K., Emma. I'll be right on. Good-bye."

Ham resumed his pecking.

"About through, Ham?" It was Ed Litton.

"Yeah. I'm just finishin' up." Ham jerked the story out of the machine and yelled at Tommy.

"What's on your mind, Ed?"

"Let's go get a drink. I feel like hell."

"Naw, Ed. I ought not to take any. I—"

"Aw hell, Ham. Why do you pull that stall every night? You know you are going, so come on, let's get out of here."

They went downstairs, and into the street.

"Where we going?" asked Ham. "To Mikes?"

"Naw. Let's go down to Bessie's. We can bull with the girls while we drink. My car's around the corner."

The negro maid let them in. Then she went to Bessie's door and knocked. "Miss Bess, heah is Mistah Eason and Mistah Litton."

Bessie's big body loomed in the door. She beamed on them. "Hello, boys," she said. "How you feelin'? Have a seat."

"Not so hot," answered Ed. "How about a drink?"

"Lucy, get the gentlemen some whiskey." . . .

"All the girls busy?" asked Ham.

"Naw," answered Bessie. "It's too early, yet. I'll get some of them out for you. Lucy, put those drinks on the table and call a couple of the girls."

Presently Billie and Ruth came in.

"These gals are new here, ain't they, Bess?" asked Ed.

"Yeah," answered Bess. "They're nice girls, though. I won't have no other kind in my house. Billie ain't but seventeen, and Ruth ain't much older."

Ruth came over and sprawled in Ham's lap. "Give me a drink, honey," she said.

Bessie scowled at her. "Get up, Ruth," she snapped. "These gentlemen are old friends of mine, and they don't like to be rushed."

Ruth got up sulkily, and moved to a chair.

"Bess," said Ham, "tell that maid to quit bringing those damn' little bar glasses in here. I want a quart, and a water glass to drink out of." . . .

Ham took the bottle from the maid and poured himself a stiff drink. "Where's Ruby tonight?" he asked.

"She ain't workin' tonight," answered Bessie. "She ain't feelin' well."

"I'm going up to see her," said Ham. He arose, picked up the quart and two glasses. "I'll see you later, Ed," he said, and went up the stairs.

Ham pounded the door.

"Who is it?" asked Ruby.

"It's me, Ham Eason."

Ruby unlocked the door. "Come in, Ham. Excuse me for not being dressed. I'm sick tonight."

"Yeah. Bess said you were. Thought I'd bring you a drink."

"Glad you did. Sit down and pour me out one."

Ruby got back on the bed.

"Gimme some water, Ham. That stuff's hot, ain't it?"

"Yeah. Pretty hot—feels damn' good, though, after you get it down."

"What you been doin' lately, Ham? How's the newspaper business?"

"Dull as hell. I get damn' sick of it. Same old routine—nothin' ever happens."

"Seems like it would be excitin'."

"About as exciting as running a grocery store. I get sick of listening to these politicians. The boys come and go, but what they say and do never changes."

Same old stuff, year in and year out."

"Yeah, I guess so," agreed Ruby.

Ham got up. "Guess I'd better go. You want another drink?"

"Yeah. I'll take one. Say, I wish you wouldn't go, I'm lonesome as hell."

"All right, Ruby. I'll stay a while."

"Good. We'll talk and drink a while. I don't want to be by myself. Sometimes when I get to feelin' like this, I think I'll kill myself."

"Yeah. I know how you feel."

"You don't know how I feel, Ham. What if you was a woman, and lived the kind of life I do?"

"Yeah. That's right—I feel sorry for you, Ruby. How did you happen to get into this?"

"I couldn't help it. I had to eat. I used to be a waitress, but it got so I couldn't get no job."

"Where'd you come from, Ruby?"

"I came from a little town in Texas. My folks was high class people. Used to have money—lost it all. I had to get out on my own. My folks was nice, though, Ham—high class people."

"Yeah. You're a nice girl, Ruby. I wish I could help you."

"I believe you, Ham. You're a good man. You're married, ain't you?"

"Yeah, I'm married. I got two kids—Alice is twelve; Pete eight—cutest kids you ever saw. I wish you could see them, Ruby. You'd love them."

"That's what you ought to be—married to some good man, and have some kids. Before I married I used to lay out drunk all night with women, and raise hell. But now I'm perfectly satisfied. I got a good home, wife and kids."

"I wish I was like you," sighed Ruby. "I haven't got nothin' or nobody."

"You're a good girl, Ruby. Damn' if I wouldn't marry you myself, if I wasn't married."

"You know, speaking of kids makes me think of my little sister. She's the nearest thing to a child of my own that I ever had. I try to send her money for clothes and things, but I can't send her much."

"My folks think I got a good job as governess in a rich family. I guess she wonders why I don't send her more, but I just can't do it. There ain't any money in this business any more—too much amateur competition. Her birthday's next week, and I haven't got any money to get her anything."

"I'll fix that for you, Ruby," said Ham. He reached for his pocketbook. "Here's ten dollars. Buy her something nice."

"Ham, you're the best guy I ever knew. I wish all men was like you."

"That's all right, Ruby. Glad to do it. Now's let have a drink."

"O. K., boy," agreed Ruby . . .

"You know, I'm going to try to get you out of here. This ain't no place for a nice girl like you."

"I wish I could," she sighed.

"I know a lot of guys that run restaurants. There's a place on Sixteenth—Hamby's—a nice place. I know Hamby well; did him a favor once—helped him beat a whiskey rap. He ought to be willing to do something for me. I'll speak to him about you. How'd you like to work over there?" Ham turned about, and looked at Ruby.

She was asleep.

Drunken Man In Taxi: "What do I owe you?"

Taxi-Driver: "\$1.60."

Drunken Man: "Back up to sixty cents. It's all I have."



IT was not a dark and stormy night. The wind was not moaning through the trees, howling down the chimney or whistling through the keyhole. Nor was the rain coming down in sheets, winding or otherwise, or beating a devil's tattoo against the window panes. No, gentle reader, or rough and tough reader, as the case may be, a bell was not tolling the solemn hour of midnight. It was a bright sunny day in June—2:37 o'clock in the afternoon if you insist on statistics. Birds twittered in the trees, bees hummed their droning roundelays, or whatever kind of lays it is that bees hum, and butterflies flitted from precipice to precipice and not a drop to drink.

The body of Johnstone Green was not lying on the shabby and inexpensive rug that covered the unvarnished nakedness of the bumpy and squeaky floor of his library. It was on the table. He was both prone on his back and supine on his face. Mr. Greene had once been a contortionist.

The old gentleman, who was not a multimillionaire, a clubman, a man about town, nor yet a recluse, was not weltering in a pool of his own blood. Nor was there a significant stream trickling from a small round hole in the center of his forehead and dripping from the table edge to form an ugly stain on the rug.

No jeweled or plain dagger hilt protruded from his back or from his shirt front. Nor was there a sign of a charay, jambiyah, tomahawk, meat-axe, machete, bolo, kris, yatagan, tulwar, dah, poniard, paper knife, bodkin, awl, screwdriver, ice pick or other piercing or cutting weapon or instrument. No bloodstained paper weight lay nearby, and there was not a livid bruise on the temple, to show how the old buzzard had met his timely death.

The eyes of the corpse were not wide, set and staring. The tongue was not protruding, and there was no contortion of the features to show that just before he

died, the old geezer had seen some unspeakable horror. Nor were his lips drawn tightly back in a dreadful, unearthly grin. Instead, the eyes were half closed, and on the wrinkled features was a broad, benignant smile.

The butler ambled into the room, carrying a tray on which reposed a well-mixed absinthe frappe. (The rhyme, tray-frappe, was unintentional. They just happened to sound that way. Sorry.) It was a very adequate frappe, with the ice tinkling merrily in a frost-coated glass.

With a *voluntary* exclamation of surprise, the butler stumbled over the rug, nearly spilling the frappe. (Let me interpolate here that the butler's name was not Jeeves, Hawkins, Jenkins, Summers, Winters, nor Fall. It was Psmith—plain Psmith. The “P” is silent like the “R” in bathing.)

Psmith recovered his balance without spilling a drop of the frappe. Then, seeing the corpse of his master grinning up at him from the table, he shuddered voluntarily.

“Good heavens!” he exclaimed. “Good heavens! Take that foolish grin off your face. You make me nervous.”

Then he drank the frappe, seeing that the master probably would not want it. This, also, he did voluntarily. It was really an excellent frappe. Psmith had seen some service in New Orleans.

Deliberately, Psmith walked to the writing desk. Unsystematically he ransacked the ancient and rickety piece of furniture. At last, ah! at last, he found the paper he was looking for—a sheet of note paper. Dipping his non-refillable pen in the empty inkwell, he gazed abstractedly at the blank sheet before him. Should he write the Chief of Police, the Mayor, the Coroner, or the undertaker? Or shouldn't he? Jeeves, I mean Psmith, loved to write letters. It was his favorite

amusement when there was no serious drinking to be done.

Sudden inspiration seized him. He put pen to paper and began to scribble. His thoughts, lubricated by the absinthe, flowed freely. But the ink did not. How could it? There was no ink. So the paper remained blanker than—just blank. What could be blanker than blank?

Hawkins, I mean Psmith, looked blankly at the blank paper.

“No soap. I mean ink,” he said. “Oh, bother! I guess I'll have to use the 'phone.”

He arose and started for the telephone. Once more he stumbled over the rug. “Gracious me,” he cursed, over his breath, not under it, “that's the second time I nearly fell and broke my wrist watch crystal.”

Standing before the 'phone, he meditated. Should he call the morgue, the bureau of water, the sanitary district, or the dog pound? At length, he decided to call up his girl friend.

“Hello, hello!” he cried, as the operator failed to answer. “What the hello, hello! Oh hell!”

“Number please.” The two sweetly solemn words all but blasted his ear drum.

“Give me Haywire, I mean Haymarket 10753.”

A pause. A buzz.

“Hello.”

“Hello. Whoozis?”

“The bailiff.”

“What! The bailiff?”

“Sure. Bailiff Hay. Didn't you ask for Haywire 35701?”

“Oh, shucks! I mean, a horse, a horse! The operator must have given me the right number. I want to report a murder.”

“Who did you kill?”

(Continued to page 44)

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Psmith. "I hate to cut kindling, and the fire is out."

"Don't mention it," said the detective, politely. He was not tall and hawk-faced, or short and bull-necked. He did not wear a derby, and he wasn't chewing a black cigar. He had high arches, and wore leather-soled shoes with narrow toes. (All right, call me a liar. I suppose if you saw a duck-billed platypus you would call it a liar, too.)

"Well," said Winters, I mean Psmith, "how did you find it out?"

"I guessed it," replied the detective. "I'm good at guessing games."

"The body is—" began Fall, I mean Psmith.

"Wait. Don't tell me. Let me guess."

"Oh, all right. That will be great fun."

"In the library," said the detective.

"Righto," agreed Jeeves, I mean Psmith.

"Weltering in a pool—"

"Wrong."

"I'm entitled to three guesses. The handle of a lethal weapon—"

"Wrong again."

"Neatly drilled between the—"

"I'm sorry, but you're all wet."

"Oh, fudge! Let's begin over again."

"No. I'm hungry. Do you like kidney saute?"

"I detest it. Come, let us go and view the remains."

"All right. But let's have a big impersonal drink first."

"I never drink, smoke, chew, swear, carry matches or stay out nights."

"A model young man—1892 model. Well, have a gum ball. I love to drink alone."

"Thanks."

Hawkins, I mean Psmith, took the brown bottle from behind the box of corn flakes. (You're wrong. This was a different bottle, and it *was* behind the

corn flakes.) He poured himself a bad, limber drink.

"Here's to your health, Mr. Mr.—" he began.

"Sparelock," said the detective.

"Seems to me I've heard the name before. Didn't I see you out with a lady—?"

"That was no lady, and it wasn't my wife."

"Well, Mr. Sparelock, unhappy daze!"

"I don't doubt it. And now to view the corpus delecti."

"Which?"

"Never mind. You wouldn't understand. Come with me. I need your moral support."

"But I can scarcely support myself. And I am not moral. I drink, smoke, play the ukulele—"

"Hold! Enough!" Sparelock marched to the library and entered, with Jenkins, I mean Psmith, tramping noisily after him.

Sparelock took one look at the corpse, then cried: "Hah! I smell a mouse."

"Wrong, again," said Summers, I mean Psmith. "It's the mixture of onions, absinthe and rye. Even if *you* don't know your nose knows."

"When did you last see the deceased alive?" asked the detective.

"Guess."

"It was at nine this morning."

"Right, but how did you know?"

"Never mind. Who was with him?"

"Guess again."

"Hm." Sparelock picked up a folded document and examined it without a microscope. "Hm." He did not put down the document and pace the floor. He did not light a pipe. He did not take a shot in the arm. He did not dust it with fingerprint powder. "Hm. It was an insurance salesman named Boggs. What an odd name."

"Right again."

"When did the salesman leave? Wait. Let me answer. He left promptly at one o'clock."

"Check."

"And he left in a hurry."

"Checkmanee. He stopped to have a drink with me."

"Ah, well. A mere detail." Sparelock walked around the corpse in a clockwise direction. Then he turned and walked around it in a counterclockwise direction. The corpse began to show signs of dizziness.

Suddenly the detective seized the waste basket and emptied its contents on the horsehair sofa—one telephone, four empty brown bottles, one empty green bottle, five corks, cigar stubs, cigarette stubs, ashes, and a tightly wadded ball of paper.

Sparelock unwadded the paper and looked at it without adjusting his glasses.

He did not wear glasses. If he had worn glasses he would not have adjusted them. "Hah!" he hissed. (Try it on your hisser if you are skeptical.) "Hah! The mystery is solved. This little scrap of paper explains why Johnstone Green, Esquire, went down to an early, timely, well deserved, and decidedly chilly grave at the tender age of ninety-seven."

"Why, oh, why? Don't tell me! The suspense is not killing me."

The detective did not snuff his cigarette, throw away his cigar, knock the ashes from his pipe, or spit out his gum. "This is a note in the handwriting of the deceased. It says: 'Memo. Have Boggs tell that funny story about the monkey and the elephant'."

"But I don't see—" began Psmith, and I mean Psmith.

"You wouldn't. Johnstone Greene laughed himself to death."



SHE: "I suppose you haven't seen Fido anywhere, dear?"

THE ENTOMOLOGIST: "Don't worry me now, darling I've just discovered a new kind of moth that barks."



GISINO, the drug peddler, felt oddly uncomfortable and on edge. His nerves were playing tricks with him. He was jumpy, twitchy, and he could not concentrate on his work. He was irritable with the snowbirds he met furtively in hallways and down alleys, and he snarled at one or two.

In his impatience and nervousness he even passed out a deck of costly heroin for the cheaper cocaine, thus cheating himself.

After roundly cursing this example of carelessness, Gisino sought the open street and took stock of himself.

"Jesu Maria," said he, softly, "what's the matter with me, anyway? I'm worse than a junky myself!" He lit a cigarette with shaking fingers and stood pondering.

The cigarette tasted rank and he flipped it away. He opened the palm of his other hand and stared surreptitiously at the neat packets of drugs therein. He carried his contraband literally in the hollow of his hand, the better to cast it away should a roving member of the narcotic squad heave into sight. It was always open season for "pushers" like Gisino.

The roving dealer in nepenthe shivered as he looked at the drugs. "Lucky thing for me," he commented, "that I ain't on

the stuff! It must be Nada's liquor that's got me going. Christ, I could stand a jolt of it."

He realized forthwith, as he thought of the liquor, that it was the anodyne he needed for his jangling nerves. A craving was stirring within him—a crawling, deep-seated craving. Amber, mellow liquor, the pure uncut Scotch that the woman Nada kept about her apartment for her numerous guests—paying guests of the masculine sex—would allay the craving.

Gisino drew a deep breath and decided to forego business and call upon Nada for some of the Scotch. Perhaps also he might demand embraces of her, as was his privilege.

He had three more dope-vending appointments for the afternoon, but they meant little to him. There were so many customers. What did it matter if three particular addicts, ridden with drug-hunger, were waiting on tenterhooks for him to appear with his precious tiny packets—the surcease for agony? Torment, ever increasing, ever tearing, would grip these wretches if he, Gisino, failed to show up. Callously the drug peddler disregarded them; consigned them to suffering. With a practiced eye out for the law, he

hailed a taxi and was driven to Nada's apartment.

"Oh, hello, Gissy," said Nada apathetically as she opened the door for him. She was a blonde, with a tired young face and a beautiful, inciting body. She held a dressing gown, the garb of her calling, about the body. The gown was of an exotic, tangerine color. Behind the cloth gleamed virginal-looking white skin. Gisino's hand dove familiarly inside the cloth. He squeezed a breast teasingly, sadistically; laughed as she winced, and went on into the apartment. He flopped into a chair.

"Bring out some of your Scotch, Nada," he directed, peremptorily. "The whole bottle. Jeez, I need it."

He spoke truthfully. Inactive now, he was more than ever upset by the craving. His nerves tensed. Sweat stood out upon his face; glistened on his hairy wrists. His mouth trembled and he shook as if he were cold.

The blonde gazed at him silently, then turned and moved listlessly to the rear, the swing of her figure unconsciously seductive. Gisino's bright dark eyes followed her, but with scant longing. She was his woman, but he was by no means in the mood for her now. He was beset, tortured by another desire . . . Later, maybe, after he had swallowed enough of the Scotch to conquer the crawling in him, he would take her and amuse himself with her. He got a kick out of harassing her abusively, hurtfully, forcing her responses. Her white, curved body was so unresisting.

The woman Nada was gone unduly long. Gisino, sprawled quivering and distraught in his chair, came to the end of his patience.

"God damn it, woman," he railed out at her, "shake a leg, back there! What are you doing?"

The blonde, unperturbed, reappeared presently, bottle in hand. Gisino saw with resentment that she had dressed herself. His thick lips curled away from his teeth.

"You would take time to doll yourself up, you bitch," he sneered. "I can sit here and die for a drink, I can!"

"Yeah?" she drawled, dully. "Well, I gotta dress sometime. I can't go around half-naked forever, even if I am in the business."

He snatched the bottle from her, struck her a back-handed blow as a matter of habit, and then gave his attention to the whisky. Eyes burning, he tantalized himself with it, staring at it admiringly; then tipped up the bottle and drank greedily. His gullet moved up and down under a bluish stubble. Half the liquor flowed down his throat. He stopped drinking, laid aside the bottle, eased back into the chair. He breathed languidly, relaxedly, eyes closed.

Eventually he looked up. He glanced at the blonde malignantly, as if meditating further chastisement. But the liquor was taking hold, mollifying him. His nerves had quit jumping; the crawling had left him. He reached indolently into his pocket for one of the inevitable cigarettes.

"Swell liquor you got, Nada," he vouchsafed, magnanimously.

He rested quietly, inhaling cigarette smoke and feeling increasingly calmed and at peace.

The blonde was watching him. Her eyes were purple-flecked and hard.

"Feel better, Gissy?"

Something in her voice roused him from his lethargy.

"Yes, I feel better." He tried to fathom her expression and, failing, was vaguely disturbed. "What's eatin' you, Nada? You look funny."

She laughed unpleasantly. "I feel funny, Gissy. Funny as hell."

He sat erect. "Say, are you hopped up? I thought you never used the snow."

Her eyes flamed. "I don't, Wop!" she said passionately. "It's the only thing I don't do! I do everything else, thanks to you. I know no limit. I go all the way, I do. I'm low and common. I take on all comers. You're to blame, you bastard. You pulled me down. It only took a year of your life to ruin all of mine, Gisino. It was a year ago today that I met you. I've been thinking about it all day."

He was amused. "Anniversary, eh? We'd oughta celebrate." He took a playful drag on his cigarette.

"I am celebrating, Gisino."

He stared at her curiously. The vague disturbance grew. "What in hell do you mean?"

"I'm celebrating by squaring accounts, Gisino. You know what you've done to me. I came to this town a silly innocent little kid, and you spoiled me. It was fun for you, wasn't it?"

His Latin face darkened. "Damn right it was fun! And what are you gonna do about it?" He stirred belligerently from his chair.

"Oh, sit down, Gisino. You needn't beat me up again. You've done enough of that already. I've got it all chalked up against you, and now I'm squaring up for it—and everything else."

He got to his feet and started to-

wards her. He was of a mind to punish her for impertinence; to batter her, bruise her, hammer her mercilessly until she turned beggingly submissive and apologetic. That was the sort of treatment she needed, with her catlike, treacherous eyes and cocksure attitude.

He neared her, but a strange exulting look in the purple-flecked eyes halted him. He was puzzled, apprehensive.

"Yes, Gisino, I'm squaring up for everything."

Native cunning told him to be careful. She might have laid a trap for him—imported some bruiser to beat him up, or something. She might even be planning to turn the heat on him. It was like these molls to pull a gun on a guy when they got worked up.

"What are you gonna do, you slut?"

"I've already done it."

"Done what?"

She viewed him levelly. "Listen, Gisino. Do you remember telling me what an awful thing it is to be on the dope—how these hopheads suffer when they can't get the stuff?"

He nodded, still puzzled.

"Well, Gisino, you're a hophead yourself—a snowbird!"

"You're crazy as hell! I never touch the snow!"

"Oh yes, you do! I've been feeding it to you—in the whisky. Morphine solution, stronger all the time. I've been giving it to you for weeks. You didn't notice

it at first; you got used to the taste. Now you're hooked—you've been given the habit. You're full of morphine right now! You'll never be able to do without it. You're a hophead!"

She laughed hysterically. "You're a hophead, do you hear? A hophead—a junkey! You made addicts out of other people—now you're one yourself. You'll

suffer, you devil out of hell! You'll suffer, and when you do, think of me!"

Berserk, he lunged at her. She dodged, gained the door, jerked it open, darted through and slammed the door in his face. A night lock clicked and in his agitation he could not work the catch.

He heard her laughing as she fled on down the stairs.



"OKAY, BOYS! — CUT!"

Don Juan of Tombigbee



Illustration By Hazel G. Keeler.

A Story by GARRARD HARRIS

COLONEL BOLIVAR WARREN of Tombigbee, Mississippi, along about 1890 hit the cotton futures market for a hundred thousand dollars, and his two daughters immediately insisted the plantation was too lonely—the family must move to a city where social careers were possible.

Mrs. Warren was ready for the fray also, and truth to tell, the Colonel had a notion he was a Napoleon of finance and could beat the stock market people at their own game. His son Tom wanted to be a lawyer and felt that only in the city could members of the bar reap the large rewards.

So the family was ready for the great

adventure. Paying off the moderate mortgage which had been on the place so long it was an heirloom, and putting the plantation in trust for fifty years so any member of the family who wished might occupy it as a haven of refuge, the Warrens moved on to urban conquests.

That is to say, all except old Uncle Ephriam, who flatly declined to leave the comfortable brick cabin he had occupied some forty years and where, as major domo he had exercised a pleasant and not too onerous authority. Uncle Eph strongly disapproved of the move.

"Naw suh, Cunnel, I ain' gwine no-wars; de Good Book say, 'bird in de

(Continued to page 53)



Perfect Measurements And Qualifications

—has this young lady, she being 5 feet high, 100 pounds in weight, has blonde hair, speaks French and dances the tango. Her name is Vera DeMueller, and she's the famous calendar girl.

V. de M.

(Continued from page 51)

hand is de nobles' wuck of Gawd,—I got dis year cabin, and I can rassle a livin' outen de ground. Den too, somebody got to stay an' look after de place gin'st de time youall comes back and dern glad to git back. Naw suh, I stays!" Thus he ultimatumed.

One man after another rented the plantation after the Warrens left—it gradually became run-down and ramshackle. When cotton went to five cents a pound it lay vacant two years. Then a tenant came on and so did the bollweevil; the tenant left without paying the rent, but the weevils, having eaten up the rent cotton, came to permanently abide. Then it continued unrented from thence forward.

Rumors percolated back to Tombigbee that the family had lost everything and was on hard lines; at any rate, Eph's check had long ago ceased from that source. Not knowing how to write he made no inquiries. Still, he stayed on, hoping against hope that some day his white folks would return. He looked after the place as best he could, despite the steady encroachment of blackberry briars and sassafras taking fields and lawn. Wistaria and Virginia creeper were smothering the old house in nature's own green mantle of charity which hid time's ravages. The cedars and mimosas down the long slope in front were a haven for mocking birds—their orisons and the whistling of quail were all that broke the solitude thereabout.

Eph received a pension of ten dollars a month from the State as a faithful servitor of the Confederacy, and for several years the Warrens sent him an equal sum as caretaker. He raised a few bales of cotton, chickens, too, vegetables and watermelons, which he peddled in the

nearby little town. Being of a saving disposition always, Eph had managed in some forty years to accumulate three thousand dollars, which was at interest in the Planter's Bank.

Under the thawing influence of several glasses of potent elderberry wine at Sis' Calline Twickenham's cabin, where he had been invited for a Sunday dinner, Eph showed his bankbook and indulged in vainglorious boasting. The news spread like fire in a cotton warehouse. Sis Calline, a heavy, hearty widow of many years' duration, determined then and there to annex Eph, who had also lost his mate in the long ago. "An' plump satcherfied to be single; mer ole ooman were a powerful fractious pusson. De scalded houn' fears de pot—never ergin fer me!" Eph had confided to a friend.

And yet, it was mighty lonesome out on the place, with the white folks gone, and no company or companionship save his mule, his dog, and the rabbits and birds.

Two other unattached widows heard the news about Eph's wealth and determinedly entered the lists with Sis' Calline. Eph began to take on weight and the luster of his coal-black skin reflected the plenteous diet many invitations afforded.

The widow believes in direct action and she knows what to do to win a man. She feeds—and keeps on feeding him. She flatters him, but fills him with tasty viands before she proceeds to familiarly gorge his vanity. Then she urges him to talk and boast, listening with a slavish and adoring deference as he preens and struts and crows.

Six months of this sort of thing resulted one day in assertion by Sis' Calline that she was engaged to be married to Eph. She said it loudly, premeditatedly,

and for a purpose in the presence of Sis' Luvenia Watts and Sis' Pearline Tobias, the other two aspirants. It was just after a protracted meeting dismissed at the Life Boat African Church. Each countered promptly with a similar claim, as the crowd gathered.

The resulting discussion was so highly acrimonious and violent that the services of three constables were required to separate the debaters and land them in the Tombigbee lockup — where hostilities were resumed at intervals during the night.

In the magistrate's court next day each belligerent proved that Eph was engaged to her, and when the evidence was all in, Eph, as he hovered on the outskirts of the crowd, felt pretty much the same. He discreetly evaporated from the scene while Lawyer Moss was describing his infamy in breaking the hearts of three poor, bereaved women. They punctuated the attorney's every period with sobs and whoops of self-pity. Eph knew in his soul that as pity is akin to live, selfpity is the preliminary to homicide, sometimes — and the wide spaces called him urgently.

Three hours later when thru his front window he beheld the three Amazons, united in common cause of vengeance and smarting under fifteen dollar fines moving in mass formation upon his domicile, he also noted that one carried an ax helve, another a pick handle, while Pearline, the most tempermental of the three, bore a long, shiny butcher knife.

Eph sounded like a cyclone as he tore through the corn patch; a hippo on the rampage could not have tramped more cotton as he surged to the river bank. His dugout canoe was barely out of range when a barrage of stones and brickbats followed him. The Robert E. Lee on

her historic race with the Natchez had nothing on him as to speed as he went Gulfward down the Tombigbee River.

Thus it came about that Uncle Eph roosted on a cotton bale at the Mobile wharf and moodily pondered. He had escaped the widows, but he was afraid to return. He did not know a soul in Mobile to identify him at the bank and he could not draw a cent of his money, a hundred miles away. He had tried for days to find a job. He had achieved peace, a continuity of single blessedness and a whole hide, but it was the peace of loneliness and utter desolation.

Accustomed of late to being entertained, fed to repletion upon the best the hen roosts of quality folks afforded, fattened as it were, for the matrimonial sacrifice, now that he had to pay in advance for each morsel of food, he found the problem serious and most depressing, with but ten cents left in his pocket.

Autumn sunlight made him drowsy. He nodded and mulled over the situation. He wished he could go back home, safely, and not be sued for breach of promise, or poisoned, or conjured as a matter of revenge. Consciousness merged into a dream in which the big-house of the Warrens again held his white folks; people again passed in and out of the hospitable doors, and there was happiness, and life, and contentment.

An unearthly noise jarred him into tense wakefulness. The steamboat Excelsior, loaded for the up-river trip, had moved alongside the wharf to get some odds and ends of last minute freight and ship some additional roustabouts. She was blowing a call for hands.

River darkies began to ooze out of the fried-catfish emporiums and dives along

(Continued to page 56)



**The
Editorial
Scissors
Cut Off
Her
Name**

and now we have left only
the girl herself, one of the
beauties in "Footlight
Parade."

Warner Brothers Photo.



(Continued from page 54)

Water and Commerce streets to investigate the employment offered by the Excelsior's booming whistles. At the end of the swinging stage the mate stood to meet and dicker with the hands over pay. He stepped down and walked to where Eph was comfortably reclining.

"Want a job, uncle?"

"Thanky suh, boss, but I ain't no rouster; done got too ole to rassle bales an' bar'ls an' sich."

"Who said anything about roustering? I want a sort of head waiter to make himself generally useful. Dollar a day, tips and grub?"

"Cap'n, you is done hired de best man fer dat job what ever rid a steamboat! Head waiterin' is de fondes' thing which I is of! I useter buttle fer de Warren fambly——"

"Oh, all right—all right—where's your plunder?"

"Baggage is right on mer haid and mer back."

"Get aboard then, and get busy!"

To the dining saloon Eph added just the right touch. While the Excelsior worked freight at Selma, he went ashore and in some way managed to acquire an ancient dress suit, white shirt, white tie and white cotton gloves. So eminently respectable was he in his official regalia, so evidently a clorode person of superior quality, that passengers were ashamed to offer him less than two-bits as a tip, thus proving again the old adage that it pays to cultivate appearance.

It was a pleasant and profitable life. He was entranced with the river, the boats, the ever changing scenery, and liberal, good humored passengers. Two aboard seemed old residents on the Excelsior. They retained their berths, trip after trip.

Eph noticed they seemed devoted to cards, in fact, were in a poker game which started when the boat pulled out from Montgomery and never ended until Mobile was reached. He asked one of the older hands on the craft about the men who were so suave, so liberal in small donations to him when he was fetching drinks, or new decks, or cigars. The other darkey eyed him pityingly.

"Dem! You ole lummo, ain't you got no eyes? Dey's gambler gemplemums. Dey rides dis boat endurin' of de cotton season, trimmin' de planters on dey way to Mobile an' Nyaw Leens. Whar's yo' eyes—don't you see dey always banks de game?"

Pickings were poor for the gambler gentlemen on the up-trip. It was on the downward cruise that men who came aboard had wallets plethoric with money and warehouse receipts for many bales of cotton, and a large and adventurous spirit in their bosoms. All year they had drudged making crops, and now was play-time. Across the green baize table many of them lost thousands of dollars.

Uncle Eph became the favorite attendant upon the games and came to know the card sharps well. In turn they found the naive old darkey could innocently give them valuable information about passengers, so they rather cultivated him and were liberal enough in gratuities.

On a trip, while the Excelsior was loading Montgomery for the return, Uncle Eph strolled uptown. He noted Bradley and Farrish, the gamblers, entering a hotel bar with a man whom they seemed to have in tow; and later, in company with the card sharps he came aboard. He was rather ordinary looking, somewhere between 30 and 40 years of age, and had a discouraged, apologetic way about him. He seemed timorous, and indifferent, and

his clothes a bit shabby. Eph paid no particular attention to him except to note the gamblers urging him at frequent intervals to the bar. Once Eph saw both Bradley and Farrish empty their drinks on the floor, while the man consumed his.

"Uh huh—somebody's got some money an' is likely to lose hit 'fore annuder day!" was Eph's muttered comment to himself.

The game started right after supper, and Bradely was careful to keep the glass at the man's elbow filled. When play ended at 2 o'clock the stranger was cleaned out.

Shortly after noon next day Eph came upon the man toward the stern of the boat, leaning upon the rail and staring at the water with an expression upon his face no man should wear.

Eph sidled up to him, for a flash of an idea had come to him as he glimpsed the man's tired grief-stricken eyes.

"Cap'n, I been watchin' you ever since I fust seed you in Mon'gomery, an' I wants to ask is you any relashun to de Tombigbee Warrenses?"

"My name is Warren—why—look here, is this Uncle Eph? I'm Tom."

"De good land er de Lawd!"

Their hands clasped and each searched the countenance of the other.

"Mist' Tommy, whar is you been, an' de rest of de fambly?"

"Father lost all the money he made—died in three years after he left. Mother lingered along and she died too, in a few years. The girls are married—and fairly well, I might say."

"An' what does you do fer a livin', Mist' Tommy?"

"Uncle Eph, I'm the most unanimous

failure that ever lived. Tried law, and all the time my mind was on hunting and fishing, green fields, blue skies and the cotton ready to gather. Tried newspaper work. And then I finally slipped down to where I got to be just an ordinary plug bookkeeper."

"You belongs out on de land!"

"I know it. The love of the outdoors is as strong in my children and my wife as it is with me. So, we decided I was to take my little savings, come back South and see if I could not land a position as bookkeeper or manager of the commissary on some big plantation, or buy an interest in a business in some small town where we could be together, and at any rate, closer to the life we all love. And now—that hope is gone."

"Why don't you go up an' farm de old home place?"

"On account of the trust father left on it I can't borrow a cent on it, and you ought to know it takes money to get a start planting. I have only a few dollars left, after my infernal folly."

"How much dem fellers git off'n you?"

"A thousand dollars."

"Good goshamighty! What you gwine do?"

"Heavens only knows—I don't."

There was a long silence while the two men stared at the yellow current slipping by.

"What fambly has you, Mist' Tommy?"

"Wife and two youngsters—a boy and a girl. My wife is a brave, fine woman; she's been giving music lessons to help me get up this money I've thrown away. I ought to be killed. They are living in

a cheap, mean house on a cheap mean street in a great big, lonely city, and I've ruined their chance to get away."

"I sho'ly would like to see dem chillen—speshually dat boy, an' make some boats for him, an' tell him tales about de varmints an' dey carryin's on, an' animule talk. Is he name Tommy, too?"

Warren nodded affirmation. Silence fell upon them broken only by the rhythmic splash of paddle wheels and soft sighing of exhaust pipes.

"Mist' Tommy, does yo' lil boy look like you useter look?"

"He is 6, and they say he is the image of me when I was that age—his sister is 8."

"Lawsy! how I'd like to be back at de old place an' have a lil feller to play wid an' look after an' make him happy!"

A tear crept down Warren's cheek. His boy had never known the joy of being out in the open. He had never seen a wild rabbit or ridden a horse, or heard the lore of denizens of wood and field. He had never had the thrill of catching a sunfish out of the creek, nor of picking blackberries, and being taught to swim in a crystal stream. His little girl had never heard a mocking bird, or the piping of a cardinal, nor filled her arms with gardenias from a hedge, nor gathered a spray of honeysuckle with the dew and the dawn upon it.

Eph wiped his eyes with the back of his hand. He knew, and he understood.

"Mist' Tommy," he said, "I's got some money in de bank; you take hit an' make a start on de place. I'll go back dere wid you an' take a chance on what we makes,

an' not draw no wages. We can shorely scratch out a good livin', ef nothin' else?"

"Dear old friend, I thank you, but I can't take your little savings."

Again the two men lapsed into abstracted silence as they mused on the swirling water, their minds full of the long ago.

"Mist' Tommy, if you had yo' money back would you reely be willin' to go on de home place an' make a start?"

"I don't think any power on earth could keep me away. As you say, we certainly could scratch out a living, and lots of happiness along with it for all of us."

Eph finally went forward to his duties. He saw Bradley, the gambler, eyeing him from a distance. He sauntered around a corner of the deck, then with a wink and an almost imperceptible nod, beckoned the gambler to come after. Eph led the way to Bradley's stateroom. Inside, with the door closed, the old negro tremblingly made disclosure.

"Boss, hell's a-popin' fer sure! I jes' wormed it out of dat man I was talkin' to—lemme tell you!" he began in a low intense voice, surcharged with excitement. Fifteen minutes later Eph slipped out tucking a brand new yellow-backed twenty-dollar bill in his pocket. Bradley hurried to find Farrish and have a conference.

Eph found Tom Warren looking over the rail again. It is not good for discouraged and down-and-out people to gaze at water too constantly. There are little voices that call and call, and whisper of rest and surcease from trouble.

"Mist' Tommy, I wants you to do me

a favor," he began with ingratiating earnestness.

"What is it?"

"I wants you to take dis yere twenty an' git in de game ternite. I feels lucky—I natcherally knows you can clean 'em up."

"I won't—I'm thru!"

"Hold on — lissen — wait a minnit! Dem's professional gamblers. Dey uses marked cyards an' cold decks. Dey's crooked as de hine laig of a bench-legged fire dawg. If I'd a knowed las' night who you was I'd stopped you."

"I wish to goodness you had!" groaned Warren.

"Now, I done slid 'round and throwed all dey decks of marked cyards in de river. Dey got to play tonight wiv new cyards dey buys from the purser. Dey ain't nuffin' but tin-horn spotes—can't do no reel fancy tricks wid cyards. If dey ain't got no marked decks you has de same chanst as dey has, ain't you?"

"I reckon so." Warren was not enthusiastic.

"Den, too, I got de left-hine foot of a jinnywine graveyard rabbit in mer lef' pants pocket, an' it's been a scratchin' me fer luck twell I feel like I got de Cuban eetch!"

"Those are pretty good signs." Tom Warren smiled in spite of his woe.

"Yasser, dey sho'ly is; so will you try 'em wid dis yer twenty? Hit's a speshual lucky bill—jes, dis, an' not a cent more. Buy twenty dollars worth of chips, first pop. An' no toddies—not nary a one!"

Tom Warren hesitated—and fell. He had imbibed enough negro superstition

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in his younger days to make him believe that luck actually visited folks at times, and had her *avant couriers*. And if luck came to the aid of Eph, perhaps she would be kind enough to help him recoup a bit from the loss.

"But—why do you insist on staking me, Eph? I have a few dollars left." Warren did not exactly relish it.

"Well, suh, you knows an' I knows a culled pusson can't play in dat game. Dat air bill is one what a conjur doctor in Mon'gomery put a heavy hoodoo spell on fer luck, an' I'm plumb wild to see if hit's any good. Jes' resk dat one bill; th'ow it down fust pop! Dem's de rules de conjer doctor said."

"Oh, all right, then." He put the bill in his pocket. "But you are an old fool, Uncle Eph."

"Nemmine dat—no drinks now—an' play dem cyards like a Warren can play 'em when he's got his mind on de game. An' if you hits a winnin' streak, stay wid 'em—an' play 'em as heavy an' as long as de game lasts!"

That night Tom Warren rather shamefacedly planked down Eph's bill and bought twenty dollars' worth of chips. A lightning swift glance passed between the two gamblers.

It seemed as tho he could not lose—it was a triangular contest between Warren and Bradley and Farrish. At 1 o'clock Bradley suggested the bank could stand no more losses and would close. Warren had won back his thousand dollars, and two hundred and fifty additional! The gambler gentlemen were so nice about it one would think he was doing a favor in

taking their money. Before Warren was out of bed next morning the radiant Eph came in.

"What I done told you—what I told you?" he jubilated.

"Here, let me give you your half——"

"Not one cent—'cept dat lucky bill, if you has it. I keeps that. You gwine stand to yo' wu'd, now, 'bout goin' up to live on de home place?"

"We'll go straight from the boat to the train this afternoon!"

"Now, I got three thousan' in bank—I puts dat wid yours. I gits you to invest hit for me, an' handle hit. Wid fo' thousand dollars we gits a flyin' start on puttin' de place in fust class money-makin' shape again. De weevils done starved out long ago an' moved on—dey's big money in dem fields."

"First thing this morning I'll write a letter to my wife to mail at the depot as we get on the train, telling her to pack up our plunder and come on with the youngsters—the remnant of the Warren family is coming back home—where they belong."

"Glory hallelujah—my white folks is on de way!"

A furious captain and a wonderfully fluent mate stood on the stage of the Excelsior at Mobile and gave Uncle Eph, his ancestors, heirs and assigns forever and ever for "jumping the boat" without notice, when capable servitors are hard to find.

Eph just grinned.

"Hard wu'ds," he observed, as they cleared the banana wharves and got out of earshot of the empurpled mate, "ain't

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never raised a blister yit, ner helped fill no graveyard I even is seen!"

As they waited for the train to Tombigbee, Eph's musings on whether he would find any of his property when he got back, and what had become of Old Beck, the mule, were interrupted by Warren.

"Look here: there's something funny about the way I won that money; it came too easy, and it wasn't hoodoo money, either. What sort of a game did you put up on those gamblers, Uncle Eph? Out with it!"

The old negro threw back his head and laughed loud and long.

"Mist' Tommy, dem gamblers got a reg'lar gold mine on dat boat. De ve'y last thing in dis worl' dey wants is a row an' a big scandalment."

"Naturally."

"I knowed you wouldn't take de money if it was jes' handed back to you—too much of de fambly pride to lose, an' den wiggle out—so I knowed de only way was to let you think you wonned it.

"Oh, you did?"

"Sho'ly; so I runs to dis Bradley an' tells him like I jes' had picked de news out of you—he saw me talkin' to you—dat terrible complains had been made to de Gov'ner of de state by some big planter friends of his which had been skunt by dem; dey says de game is crooked an' de sheriffs is all been fixed so dey won't break it up."

"Why, you old rascal!"

"An' I tole Bradley you was a sorter no 'count' po relashun of de Gov'ner, an' he done hired you private to get de

evydence on to put dem gamblers in the penitenshiary, an' confiscate de boat, an' play the devil inginerally——"

"You certainly are a gorgeous old liar!"

"Yasser, I sho is, when I trys—an' I sez, sezzi, de Gov'ner give you \$500 'spense money, an' de rest was yourn, an' now you done lost it you is soured on de job, an' you said if you had your money back an' de 'spense money you'd jump de boat at Mobile an' write de Gov'ner dat folks been lowratin' dem and it's all a peck o' lies; den you'd go to Nyaw Leens to try your luck on de races."

"Ananias was a rank amateur compared to you——"

"I sez, sezzi, you feels like you had been made a boob of, an' is 'shamed so you wouldn't take de money ef it was handed back plain so, but de only way you'd take it was to win it. So we fixed up de scheme an' Bradley gimme dat bill—he tuck de number, even. I was to make certain you wouldn't report 'em an' would jump de boat, an' den, entice you into playin'. Ef you come in de game an' flang down dat twenty, Bradley knowed de deal was on, an' dey job was to feed money to you."

"How about those marked cards?"

Eph grinned joyously.

"Oh, well—I speck dey is all marked—dat was jes' talk."

"Well, I'm certainly not going to give them back the money!"

"Sho'ly not! Dem gamblers was dat grateful to me dey give me a ten-dollar tip an' two vestes an' a pair of striped britches an' a passel of ties!"

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"And, Eph, how about those widows that chased you away?"

Eph's countenance radiated sunshine.

"Dat's one reason I wus so pintedly determined to git you back up home. Dem wimmens won't dare put dey foots on de place if dey knows one of de fambly is dere—dey knows better. An' soon's I tells dat I done turned all my money to you, dat settles hit wid dem, fer a true fack."

"Surely, you don't intimate those widows are mercenary?"

"Not speshually—dey's jes' wimmen—an' dere's nuffin in all dis yere worl' as oninterestin' ter a woman—widders in particular—as a man wha has nuffin'. I's plumb safe!"



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